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TIME.

BY ALICE CARY.

Time is time, O, glorious Giver,
With its restless sand and scale,
But a boat and wandering river
Waiting hard to the light!

Constantly its waves are rolling
To our days, dead, or they lash,
Through the network still are falling
To the realm of eternal chaos.

Man, whatever light is glowing
On its surface, understands
That the unseen bounds are flowing
Cold and white with dust man's hands.

Yet, each glowing rock that trembles
By unseen passage, strikes to life
Deathful and joyous bubbles
That are ever born through strife.

Overhung with rain-like shadows,
Strewth by chorus song, among
To the long, delightful measures
Flowing with immortal Hope!

Where no mourning reaches, never,
Farewell, pain, or fear to turn,
And the changes bring us ever,
Beautiful and ever means of love.

ALARIC;

OR,

THE TYRANT'S VAULT.

A SICILIAN STORY OF EARLY TIMES.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER IV.

SUSPICIONS.

When Alaric's fleeting senses were all given up to death, he resigned himself to his fate without an effort; but in the moment that followed the bestowing of his head in the night of lustful, and the resolution to live came upon him, and with it came an impulse to his will which gave fresh vigor to his faculties. The fatal points were close upon his bosom, and in a moment more the hide of his life would be let forth.

"Hold!" he cried, in a tone so deep and startling that the three executioners stopped, and dropping the points of their weapons an instant consumed hand held them. "The king fears me?" he added, when he saw that the animation of the ruffians had been distracted from their work of blood.

"I know not," replied one of the trio, in a half-savage tone.

"But I know," resumed Alaric. "Were it not so he would not have sent you here to put me to death. But I will not ask you to destroy your master."

"It would benefit you little if you did ask," said the ruffian, with an unsaving shake of the head.

"I know your office too well to hope for mercy at your hands," continued the youth, with some show of mystery in his manner; "but ere I die I would confide to your keeping a secret which may not only benefit the king, but which may be the means of advancement to yourselves."

"If you have a secret let us have it, for we have no time to waste."

"It is a secret of the utmost importance to the king. Here—it is all upon this piece of parchment," pursued Alaric, in quick, eager tones. He pieced his hand within his bosom as he spoke, and when he drew it forth he added—"Take this to his majesty when I am dead, and bid him look well to the men where names are therein written. It will serve you a good turn——"

At this moment the leader of the ruffians had advanced to take the parchment which he supposed he was going to receive, and his sword was so carelessly held that our hero, watching his opportunity with a keen eye, caught at it and secured it, and, before the dismayed executioner could fully realize what had transpired, he was half prostrate upon the pavement with his head severed several from his body.

Alaric had no fear now. With the heavy sword in his grasp he leaped into a corner, and placed himself upon his guard. The remaining executioners, as soon as they saw the fate of their companion, and realized that the prisoner was armed, sprang upon him with fierce execrations. With a lightning-like movement the youth leaped into the opposite corner, thereby avoiding the thrusts which were aimed at him, and also turned he dealt the man nearest to him a blow which staggered him. Without waiting for a fresh attack he sprang upon the other ruffian before he had fully recovered himself, and sadly slew him. The second man had somewhat recovered himself, and now set upon the youth with will fury; but the blood was streaming over his face from the wound he had received, and his sight was for from being sure. Alaric glided easily away from his blows, and finally gave him a thrust that placed him beyond the power of further effort.

As soon as the youth saw that his three dark visitors were thus safely disposed of, he caught up the torch and made his way from the dungeon; but ere he had gone far he remembered that his gaol might be too easily recaptured, and he thought it safe to make some sort of an exchange with one of the fallen men. So he went back, and having taken the dark frock from the second man he had slain, he put it on over his own, and then buckled the broad leathern belt about his loins. To this he suspended the scabbard of the sword he had taken, and when he had donned the large black cap he once more saw his way clear. He remembered the way which he had come, and he followed it back until he had ascended two flights of steps, and reached the entrance to the long corridor, within which stood the guard of whom Hippon had obtained the torch. Here he stopped, for he dared not go on further in this direction. At length, now that he had reached the ground-floor of the palace, night cast him like life. He saw a narrow passage leading off to the right, and from the direction it took, and the current of fresh air which came through it, he judged that it must lead in to the rear court. He entered it, and pressed on, still keeping the torch, which burned with a bright, flaring flame. At some distance he came to a descent of four broad steps, and when he had gone down them the sage grew wider; and in a few minutes he came upon a boy, who seemed to be asleep by a low door. The youngster started to a sitting posture as our hero came up to him, and having rubbed his eyes till he fancied he could see, he looked up.

"Minerva save us!" he ejaculated, with a shudder. "Are ye going to kill anybody out here?"

"Not if you keep quiet," replied Alaric, as he passed on. But he hesitated ere he had gone many steps, and turned back. He might prove this fellow into some service.

"Look ye, boy," he said, holding the torch so that as little light as possible should shine into his own face, "you keep here, don't you?"

"Yes, master; I'm one of the wine-keeper's boys. I'm only a little fellow, getting upon his feet."

"And you are well acquainted with the doors and passages hereabouts?"

"Yes."

"You sometimes slip out of a night, when there's nobody to watch you?"

"No, no, master.—I can go into the court when I please."

Alaric saw his eyes about him to see that no one else was near, and then said, in a low, cautious tone:

"I would not willingly harm you, boy, and if you will conduct me safely from the palace no one ever shall befall you; but if you hesitate, or refuse, this sword shall——"

"Mercy! mercy! good master!" the fellow cried, clasping his hand in terror.

"Hush!—Make no noise. If you will conduct me safely to the outer court, no harm shall come to you."

"But aren't you one of the king's——"

"Never mind what I am. Will you guide me, or shall I——"

"Mercy!" uttered the boy again, as he saw the point of the sword raised. "Don't kill me. I'll do anything you say."

"Then mind me: Conduct me from the palace as speedily as possible. If you hesitate, or lead me into danger, you shall die on the instant; but if you guide me out as I have said, I will do you no injury. Now what say you—can you do it?"

The boy contrived after awhile to overcome his fright, and when he found that there was no present danger he seemed to recover more calmly; and then he took another long breath and said that he feared the stars man who stood by him.

"I can lead you to the rear court," he said, "but the outer gates are very high and guarded are ministered at every outlet."

"Is there not some door or gate by which I can gain the public street?"

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated the boy, gazing into his interlocutor's face with wonder. "You must be a new man among the executioners, or thought everybody in Syracuse knew that no passable avenue to the palace was left ungarded."

"Well, well," said our hero, who liked not to stand in the passage, "lead me to the court."

"This follow me."

"But my torch—I would not have that seen."

ALARIC AND THE WINE-CELLER'S BOY.

"You may carry it to the end of this corridor, but no farther."

Alaric followed him until he stood upon the pavement of the lower court.

"There is the hall," said the youthful guide, pointing to a large structure of white marble, close at hand; "and beyond is the palace. The wall runs all around, and the postern are guarded."

"Is there not some gate by which you can gain the key?" asked Alaric, after he had thrown over his countenance a frown.

"I don't know of any, sir."

"Then you'd stand leaving the court at this time of night? What is necessary to enable one to pass the guard?"

"A pass from the chief, who keeps his station in the guard-hall, where all must go out and come in who leave the palace."

"What's this pass?"

"A token of honor."

"And all who go out have one?"

"Yes."

"And if they have such a pass, the guard ask no questions?"

"Not often."

Alaric saw very plainly that he was not free yet, and he might have to resort to more further stratagem ere he could gain the public highways.

"Boy," he said, after he had reflected awhile, "if I bet you go now, will you return directly to your cell? I found you, did my nothing of having seen me?"

"I will, my master."

"But how may I know that you will do it?"

"I will take the sword and keep the pass. I will a lie," replied the boy, earnestly.

Alaric believed, from what he had seen of the lad, that he might trust him—that is, he believed a sense of fear would lead him to hasten back and keep quiet; so he resolved to let him go. First, however, he asked him where the pass was which he must show at the gate, and the fellow pointed out a high tower upon the wall, and said the guard were stationed there.

"And now," said our hero, "I want you to remember one thing: if you betray me I will be well: but if I am detected through your means, I shall surely return to you again."

"Holy Jupiter cross me, and great Vulcan pound me into hot iron, if I ever say a word!" cried the boy, earnestly and fervently. "If you won't hurt me, I will never speak a word of you."

Alaric bit the fellow on, and when he had gone from his sight he turned towards the tower, which he could plainly see looming up against the sky. A walk of smooth pavement led to it, and when he had come near enough to distinguish the gate way, he stopped. He could see the forms of several soldiers lounging about. Their bright spears beads gleaming in the light of the heavy lamp that hung within the arch, and a goodly mace up his courage, and the spiritual force would be of no service there; so he sustained back until he had gained the shelter of a large olive tree, where he stopped to consider. He knew it would be of no use to attempt to force his way, for then was built on purpose to resist all such efforts, either from without or within, being proof that even full sense of escape, and the enemy the better. He judged that a bold front would be his best policy, and accordingly would be now enforced.

While he stood thus pondering, he heard footsteps at no great distance, and pretty soon he saw a dusky form approaching from one of the wings of the palace. As the figure came near, he crept to the tree, he remained still, and watched the coming gentleman. In a few moments he could see that it was a man, and, in a few more, that it was a servant, as the garb presented no ornament to reflect the starbeams. Alaric's course was quickly resolved upon, and having observed himself that no one else was approaching, he stepped out to the side of the walk just as the stranger came along.

"A fair evening," said our hero, stepping to the front of the man.

The man stopped and gazed at the speaker. He was a middle-aged person, and, from his garb, appeared to be a servant in the purveyor's department.

"Are you going out?" Alaric continued.

"Of course. I'm going out," returned the serving-man, rather huffily. "I hope the king hasn't placed the sentinels over us for ghosts."

"Not at all," responded Alaric. "But, if you will listen a moment, I can give you a piece of news that may make your fortune."

"Eh? A fortune?" echoed the fellow, forgetting that his companion wore the garb of a common executioner.

"Yes. Have you a pass?"

"Of course I have. I shouldn't be on my way in this direction without it." And as the man spoke he drew a triangular plate of brass from his pocket.

"Are you going out on business, or merely for pleasure?"

"For pleasure, of course. One needs pleasure after lugging provisions all the day long."

"Will you be out long?"

"Till daylight."

"Then you will have plenty of time. Come this way—beneath this tree—and I will tell you the secret. But you will not divulge it."

"You can depend upon me."

If a gold piece had been more than a thousand broad pieces of silver, and a full purveyor's office, I'll quit the palace myself," said Alaric, as he saw the fellow hesitate.

"What is it?" he asked.

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"What is it?" he asked.

"Dost see where yonder star almost touches the top of the temple?" said the youth.

"Aye," responded the other, gazing in the direction pointed out.

And while he yet gazed at the star, Alaric gave him a blow upon the ear that felled him to the earth, and without loss of time, he drew his sword and knelt upon his breast.

"Now, sir, make a single sound, and thus art a dead man!" the youth said, in a tone which carried conviction with it.

"Don't murder me?" gurgled the fallen man. "What is it? What mean you?"

"Only for you to keep perfectly quiet, and obey me," responded Alaric, with the point of his sword at the fellow's heart. "If you make no resistance to thwart me, you shall be free from all harm, for I am no bold cut-and-slay man."

The purveyor's man made some objection, but the sharp pressure which he felt upon his breast prevented to his bosom soon brought him into submission, and he suffered himself to be gagged. Alaric then made him exchange clothes with him, for he wished nothing more than to appear natural in the blood-stained garments he now wore; and when this was done he possessed himself of the pass and the long bunch of keys which hung at his girdle; then the cap down over his brow, and was ready to the post of the guard. He made a trivial remark about the lateness of the hour as he exhibited his pass, and the sentinel, who seemed to be waiting anxiously for the relief guard, at once complied with it, and gruffly bade him pass on.

In a very short time Alaric was in the public street, and without stopping long to consider, he hurried on. He remembered the way from the palace to the quarter where Bellerus lived, and he concluded to seek the old sailor's residence first, trusting that, if necessary, he would thence find some place of concealment. He was resolved to get out of the city as soon as possible, and take Insulæ with him, knowing that upon the shores of Greece he could find a home where peace and joy might be his. He had forgotten the startling thought which had been called to his mind at the Hermit's Cave; or, if it still dwelt in his memory, the thought of happiness with his beloved overcame it. He had seen enough of tyranny to assure him that, while Pyrrho sat upon the throne, there could be no peace for him within its walls. Had he returned to his native city for vengeance alone he might have felt differently; but he came for love—for he willingly sought out the exile.

Swiftly the youth hurried on, avoiding the few people who he encountered in the streets, and keeping his features hidden as much as possible. He would find Bellerus, and set out secretly in place of safe retreat from the myrmidons of the tyrant when he was convinced would be ere long pursuing him.

CHAPTER V.

ROYAL PRESENCE.

Pyrrho had determined that he would not retire until he had heard the final account from his prisoner.

"Domitus," he said, to his chamberlain, who was alone with him, save the twelve black slaves who stood behind the throne, "I have strange premonitions in connection with this youth, Alaric. I speak freely with you, because I know that the hour which sees me fall must also witness your demise."

And the king spoke truly here. He felt sure of the faith of his chief officers only because their fates were inseparably linked with his own. They had become so obedient to the people that the power of the throne, and fear of the royal vengeance, alone kept the hand of vengeance from them. Full well did the royal chamberlain, and the chief police, and the captain of the guard, and all the contrivers know, that if Pyrrho should fall they would most assuredly fall with him. And so they were bound to him by the very tie of their own lives.

"Domitus," continued the spirit of fear, "do I know we stand or fall together?"

"I thought not of questioning your loyalty," said Domitus. "It was a mere passing thought, and I gave it utterance. But of this Alaric: I have seen recollections, old dreams, and premonitions called up by his presence."

"Yet your misgivings will soon be rid of them."

"How so?"

"The youth must be dead ere this; if the executioners perform their work as they usually do."

"I know. They should return to me in a few words. Their swords are more ready than their tongues. But it is not alone of this youth that my thoughts are troubled. Years ago there was some whisper of Bellerus, at whose house this Alaric was found. I was only a general then, and Glaucus was king. Had I been king I might have followed it out; but I had the old man watched, but nothing has appeared against him. All his long-departed nativeness are of the most peaceful character. But this event has revived the doubts, and I mean to believe them."

"I remember something of this, sire," said the chamberlain, thoughtfully.

"Ah—do you?"

"Yes. I will it to mind now."

"Can you remember it now, particular?"

"Let me think. Aye—I have it now. It was while Glaucus was yet king, and the Greeks were through fear of his general, Insulæ. The craftsman, Bellerus, was company with some of his fellows, said, that he *might love to see the home when a word from his lips would bring the slaves of Sicily, and the Greeks.*"

"Aye, Domitus, then art right," cried the king. "I remember now. And I remember, too, some words which were spoken in the man's saying at the time; though, if I remember right, he declared he never uttered but one word of treason."

"It was so," replied the chamberlain; "and that one word was——"

"And there it may rest for the present," added the king, as he arose from his seat, and bowed towards the small door by the throne and slipped his feet into his sandals. "Domitus, and Pyrrho bade him go and call the chief police.

"Come, come, Hippon," the monarch said, as drawing that official into the council, for he had thus been brought into a report from the executioners.

"Have they not had time to do their work?"

"Peace!"

"Then seek them, and bring me word."

Hippon ordered the guard to advance, and when he was gone the king began to walk to and fro with rapid steps.

"Thou art troubled, sire," spoke Domitus, as he watched Pyrrho's changing countenance.

"Aye—I am troubled," he said. "But the purpose, I feel not as I would wish to feel. Doubt and fear are the besetting sins of my nature."

"And are they not mere dreams, after all?"

"I don't know. The king struck heavily across the wide apartment several times, and then he stopped suddenly.

"I tell thee the earth is fearful beneath our feet, and the least opening for the volcano might burst forth. Domitus," he continued, seizing the chamberlain by the arm, and gazing eagerly into his face, "why should you and I long to live in the truth that our own consciousness. I tell thee again—the air is hot in Syracuse, and at times I feel it burn as I breathe it. We must be wary and prompt. If there be those upon whom suspicion can rest, no matter how slightly—they must be put from off the face of the earth! Dost comprehend?"

"Aye, sire; and most fully do I agree with thee."

"I'll keep my eyes open, Domitus, and if the earthquake a disposition to heave in any one spot, upon that spot the sword shall be laid!"

"Right, sire. I know how suddenly a great fire can grow from one clumsy spark."

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"And you'll put those sparks out. Blood is an excellent thing with which to quench them."

At this point the jailer removed. He came in without ceremony, and his face was pale, and his body trembled.

How now?" cried the king, as soon as he saw the officer's strange agitation. "Speak! What has happened?"

"The prisoner has escaped!"

"Fool! I spoke of the youth, Alaric."

"And of him I speak," returned Hippon.

"But he has not escaped!"

"Yes, sire."

"Nay, by the gods, then liest! Then did'st tell me he was safely lodged within the deepest dungeon of the palace; and from thence mortal man ne'er yet escaped!"

"But, sire," cried the jailer, "it not explain. The prisoner has been his way over your executioner. He has slain them all three, and then passed out."

"But he had no weapon."

"He must have first disarmed one of the executioners, for he has the sword and the scabbard of his consort, and another of his cutters."

"Is this true?" asked the king, grasping his jailer by the shoulder.

"Are as I have told thee, sire."

"And what have ye done?"

"I have alarmed the guards through every avenue of the palace, and sent some to the court."

"Then haste thou away and bring me intelligence of the truth. He cannot have passed the guard, and so he cannot have left the palace."

Hippon left the royal presence, and the king he soon gone the king turned to his chamberlain.

"Now by the divine Osiris!" he said, clenching his hands together, "this exceeds all belief. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Never, sire."

"Is still three of my executioners! To rob that gigantic villain of his sword! By the demons of Jupiter, he has the blow of the volcano in him. But he cannot have escaped."

"I should think not, sire."

After this the monarch paced to and fro across the apartment, and finally sank down upon the base of one of the pillars by the throne, where he remained until the jailer returned.

"He, good Hippon," he cried, starting to his feet, "have ye secured him?"

"No, sire. He has fled from the palace."

"But upon thee for a liar, fool! He could not have fled. My walls are neutral can overcome, and my guardians impregnable."

"Let me speak, sire," urged Hippon, trembling with apprehension. "The prisoner must have taken extraordinary means to accomplish this. Beneath the cold stone floor, near the bath, we found a somewhat of the purveyor, named Alaric. He was bound hand and foot, and a firm step was put upon his mouth. He told us, when we had set him free, how a man, clad in the habiliments of an executioner, set upon him and knocked him senseless upon the earth, and then bound him and gagged him, and robbed him of his garments and his gear, and then made off. Upon going to the gate we learned that a man, wearing the garb of the purveyor's servitor, had passed out about half an hour before."

"Have ye sent for him?" demanded the king, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Yes, sire," answered the jailer.

"Ye, sir!," interrupted the king, striding across the apartment, and striking a bell which hung by one of the hidden doors. In a moment the captain of the royal guard made his appearance.

"Claudius," spoke the monarch, "did'st see the prisoner, Alaric, who was brought hither this night?"

"I did, sire," replied the captain.

"Then mark me well. He has escaped. Select the swiftest and surest of the steeds where the fore can ride of the gates, with this order in the guard: "That no person be allowed to leave the city, upon any pretext whatever, till further orders. And let at any gate, a man has passed out within the last hour, who was well and cleanly known, par'ticular purveyor put upon his track. Hasten with him, and send your thousand hither at you get."

With a quick step the captain left the royal presence, and promptly the king turned to the jailer.

"I think," said the king, turning to his chamberlain, "that the youth may have gone direct to the house of Bellerus."

"Very likely he may have stopped there for a while," returned Demetrius; "but I should hardly think he would remain there."

"All-ah events, I shall send for him there, and I'll have all in the house arrested and brought hither."

"But, sire, be careful."

"Of what?"

"Of this Bellerus. The more I think of him, the more I fear him."

"Fear so humble a man?" muttered the king, half to himself.

"I have heard such a thing," returned Pyrrho, "and I gave it no credence. Think you there is reason in the rumor?"

"I think there may be, sire. I have heard that they worship as moses Dalo only would not worship else but one God, whom they call Jehovah, and that they hold all name in such veneration that they will not pronounce it save in sacrificial places."

"Why—such is the name of an abstract deity," said the king. "I have called herself worship such an one."

"Aye," responded Demetrius, "and these craftsmen have newly brought the worship hither."

"Then, by the Fates, we must have the old one sent here. I would examine him."

"But be cautious, sire. We know not who may be his friends, nor how much stir his arrest and punishment might make."

"I will use all caution, Demetrius, and if the organization lives an existence in our midst, I must know it. That, by Osiris, I must!"

The lieutenant approached the king, and bowed his head.

"Then didst arrest the youth at the house of Bellerus?" said Pyrrho.

"I did, sire."

"You know he had escaped?"

"Yes. The captain told me so."

"Then take a strong guard and make all haste to that same house, and find Alaric if you can. If he has been there and is gone, then send all when you may find, in the house hither under suitable guard, and lay upon his track all necessary. Be quiet about it, and make as little show as possible."

With this the lieutenant turned away, and the king and his chamberlain were once more alone. The monarch paced up and down the apartment for some moments, and when he finally stopped, he placed his hand upon the shoulder of his companion, and looked him earnestly in the face.

"Demetrius," he said, "I have an idea—one that I have long been in need of. By the horns of Pan, but this Bellerus is becoming quite forbearing?"

"How so, sire?" asked the chamberlain, in surprise.

"I'll tell thee when the time comes. Then shouldst the old vault in the closet, beyond my private bath?"

"Yes."

"And what think you it was built for?"

"I always supposed some previous king must have digged for water there. It is very deep, is it not?"

"Aye—as deep as darkness itself. By the gods, it is a glorious thought!"

And for a while the king almost forgot the flight of his prisoner in the new and strange idea which had presented itself to his mind.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR IS SAVED; BUT WHERE IS THE OTHER?

Alaric reached the door of Bellerus's dwelling in safety, but he found it closed against him in no unlikeness. He supposed, as soon as his escape was discovered, the guards would come to the door of them, and for awhile he thought of seeking elsewhere. But upon reflection further, he thought it safe enough just to lie the old man know of his situation, and, perhaps, seek his aid in gaining a secure retreat. He thumped loudly upon the gate, and in a few moments Bellerus made his appearance.

"How! Back so soon?" cried the artisan, as he held the door ajar.

"Hush!—Speak not too loudly here," quickly responded Alaric, as he unceremoniously forced a have come back with a thousand times more danger at my heels than when I left. Let me in, and seek your client, and there I will tell you all."

Without further question the old man led the way to an inner apartment, where Issalie speedily made them. She had not yet retired, and when the first sound of her lover's voice had brought her from her sleeping-room, she had hastily donned and looking up into his face, she murmured—

"Alaric, you have been in mischief! I should be thus forward; but O, my beloved, when they came for you I was sure already to be lost. Tell me how the cruelty of him who had sent for thee. O—after so many years—when our love was just beginning to be blessed!—Alaric, I am glad!—glad! But—thou art pale, my beloved. Thy head trembles. Thou art wounded! Alaric, I will die!"

"Sweet one," cried the youth, pressing the fond girl to his heart, "I am not hurt, and will not leave you again. Be quiet, and there I will tell you."

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Issalie quickly saw that the old man had told the story of his lover's escape, and she knew that he could give them no assistance, so she left her father and Bellerus alone, and went to her own room.

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"Now by the divine Osiris!" he cried, clenching his hands together, "this exceeds all belief. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Never, sire."

"Is still three of my executioners! To rob that gigantic villain of his sword! By the demons of Jupiter, he has the blow of the volcano in him. But he cannot have escaped."

"I should think not, sire."

After this the monarch paced to and fro across the apartment, and finally sank down upon the base of one of the pillars by the throne, where he remained until the jailer returned.

"He, good Hippon," he cried, starting to his feet, "have ye secured him?"

"No, sire. He has fled from the palace."

"But upon thee for a liar, fool! He could not have fled. My walls no neutral can overcome, and my guardians impregnable."

"Let me speak, sire," urged Hippon, trembling with apprehension. "The prisoner must have taken extraordinary means to accomplish this. Beneath the cold stone floor, near the bath, we found a somewhat of the purveyor, named Alaric. He was bound hand and foot, and a firm step was put upon his mouth. He told us, when we had set him free, how a man, clad in the habiliments of an executioner, set upon him and knocked him senseless upon the earth, and then bound him and gagged him, and robbed him of his garments and his gear, and then made off. Upon going to the gate we learned that a man, wearing the garb of the purveyor's servitor, had passed out about half an hour before."

"Have ye sent for him?" demanded the king, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Yes, sire," answered the jailer.

"Ye, sir!," interrupted the king, striding across the apartment, and striking a bell which hung by one of the hidden doors. In a moment the captain of the royal guard made his appearance.

"Claudius," spoke the monarch, "did'st see the prisoner, Alaric, who was brought hither this night?"

"I did, sire," replied the captain.

"Then mark me well. He has escaped. Select the swiftest and surest of the steeds where the fore can ride of the gates, with this order in the guard: "That no person be allowed to leave the city, upon any pretext whatever, till further orders. And let at any gate, a man has passed out within the last hour, who was well and cleanly known, par'ticular purveyor put upon his track. Hasten with him, and send your thousand hither at you get."

With a quick step the captain left the royal presence, and promptly the king turned to his companion.

"I think," said the king, turning to his chamberlain, "that the youth may have gone direct to the house of Bellerus."

"Very likely he may have stopped there for a while," returned Demetrius; "but I should hardly think he would remain there."

"All-ah events, I shall send for him there, and I'll have all in the house arrested and brought hither."

"But, sire, be careful."

"Of what?"

"Of this Bellerus. The more I think of him, the more I fear him."

"Fear so humble a man?" muttered the king, half to himself.

"I have heard such a thing," returned Pyrrho, "and I gave it no credence. Think you there is reason in the rumor?"

"I think there may be, sire. I have heard that they worship as moses Dalo only would not worship else but one God, whom they call Jehovah, and that they hold that name in such veneration that they will not pronounce it save in sacrificial places."

"Why—such is the name of an abstract deity," said the king. "I have called herself worship such an one."

"Aye," responded Demetrius, "and these craftsmen have newly brought the worship hither."

"Then, by the Fates, we must have the old one sent here. I would examine him."

"But be cautious, sire. We know not who may be his friends, nor how much stir his arrest and punishment might make."

"I will use all caution, Demetrius, and if the organization lives an existence in our midst, I must know it. That, by Osiris, I must!"

The lieutenant approached the king, and bowed his head.

"Then didst arrest the youth at the house of Bellerus?" said Pyrrho.

"I did, sire."

"You know he had escaped?"

"Yes. The captain told me so."

"Then take a strong guard and make all haste to that same house, and find Alaric if you can. If he has been there and is gone, then send all when you may find, in the house hither under suitable guard, and lay upon his track all necessary. Be quiet about it, and make as little show as possible."

With this the lieutenant turned away, and the king and his chamberlain were once more alone. The monarch paced up and down the apartment for some moments, and when he finally stopped, he placed his hand upon the shoulder of his companion, and looked him earnestly in the face.

"Demetrius," he said, "I have an idea—one that I have long been in need of. By the horns of Pan, but this Bellerus is becoming quite forbearing?"

"How so, sire?" asked the chamberlain, in surprise.

"I'll tell thee when the time comes. Then shouldst the old vault in the closet, beyond my private bath?"

"Yes."

"And what think you it was built for?"

"I always supposed some previous king must have digged for water there. It is very deep, is it not?"

"Aye—as deep as darkness itself. By the gods, it is a glorious thought!"

And for a while the king almost forgot the flight of his prisoner in the new and strange idea which had presented itself to his mind.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR IS SAVED; BUT WHERE IS THE OTHER?

Alaric reached the door of Bellerus's dwelling in safety, but he found it closed against him in no unlikeness. He supposed, as soon as his escape was discovered, the guards would come to the door of them, and for awhile he thought of seeking elsewhere. But upon reflection further, he thought it safe enough just to lie the old man know of his situation, and, perhaps, seek his aid in gaining a secure retreat. He thumped loudly upon the gate, and in a few moments Bellerus made his appearance.

"How! Back so soon?" cried the artisan, as he held the door ajar.

"Hush!—Speak not too loudly here," quickly responded Alaric, as he unceremoniously forced a have come back with a thousand times more danger at my heels than when I left. Let me in, and seek your client, and there I will tell you all."

A VISIONARY'S DREAMS.

BY SALLIE M. HYDE.

They called him dead, they told me he was laid
In yon old ground—he had loved its shade;
And so I wandered there, and, 'mid the tree
Where he was wont to sing, came unto me
One of his own—that Vertue—grave deep
On his cool sepulcher of a lambent light—

Oh, in the soft blue of the sun's first star,
A broken strain from off his harp'd golden,
A misty grove or faint flower, I saw
And then forgot it, wherefore—"We have in hell
And some sympathetic notes from her reside;
"With this and all the angels is the theme."

There comes the moon—oh, he is coming now—
Through the trees I see his face, and hear his step;
Where from my mouth of clay he sang me first,
His beauty flashes over half the skies,
And in my night there is the lovelier light
Of the last Friend burning there the night!

Her yonder pearly chest, eternity fair—
A pale, slight, youthful form 'e reclining there
Like the unfinished idea of sainted shine,
Built with a tender sentiment when his eyes,
And love his soulless—for beautiful and true!
And I the theme gone—he is going too!

LORD WINCUP.

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

BY OLIVER SINCLAIR.

SCENE I.

THE YOUNG LORD AND THE FORESTER'S BRIDE.

Two young men were seated at a table, over their wine, in one of the most fashionable halls of England.

One of these was the young lord of the manor, who had but a few days previously, by the death of his father, the earl of W——, come into the inheritance and title to the property, and the proud pillow of his ancestors.

He was the uniform of the Guards, was handsome, but with a sensual eye; and flushed with wine and pride, as he now was, his looks were imperious and disagreeable. He talked in a loud tone, and boasted in his conceit of his anticipated conquests in the field of beauty.

He had given a dinner that day, and these two alone remained sober, or rather not so inebriate as their fellows, who one after another had been led by watching servants to their chambers.

"What! now you—you—are to be married in a month, my lord?" said his gentle companion, a poor, college lordy, who worshiped wealth and rank, and was mean enough to be the parasite of his patron!!

"Ruh! I marry for fashion's sake, and to unite the broad acres of Lady Emma to my own domains. She is a beauty, too, and I shall be proud of possessing her, and showing her about in London! Besides, you know I shall win a cool ten thousand on her!"

"Ah, indeed, my noble lord!" clutched the sycophant, sloping his wine, "but not daring to drink deep, as his "noble master" had commanded him to keep sober, and look after him, if he should unwell—

"Lord Tom Berkley bet me a cool ten I could not win her!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! You won the cup there, my lord! A good deal more!"

"A demd fool she! But I love him for half his income! This will put the Earl Emma's treasure!"

"Wine and wassail, that is my motto," said Mr. Fisper, a little tipsily, swinging his glass quite irreverently, both as to the wine and his gentleman.

"You don't drink, my lord! Let me fill your glass!"

"Aye, but let us drink to the three w's!"

"What are they, Harry?"

"Sir" interlocuted only the young noble, glaring upon his humbled companion.

"Beg his million pardons, my noble lord! Didn't mean to call you so familiarly! When the wine's in the wit's out! I was a fool, you see!"

"Yes, a gentoon fool! The three w's are—

"Women, wine and wassail!"

"Good, excellent, bravo!"

In his excitement, and wishing to atone for his undue familiarity, Mr. Fisper's parasite may now mixed with one foot on his chair and the other upon the table, and drank the toast with a "Hip-hip-hurrah!" in response to which Lord Harry Wincup dashed his glass over his head, saying that it was broad day, and time "for honest folk to be in bed."

The nobleman (not the noble man) then leaned on the shoulder of Fisper and reeled out of the banquet-hall. A few moments after their disappearance Mr. Fisper stole in again, and going to the wine poured out and drank several glasses rapidly and with a stealthy air, as if to make up for his forced abstemiousness.

"Thinks I'm a fit-fool my lor' does! I'm wise enough to fill-fuddle my own wine, and say I Pisper is not the first w-wise fellow that has pp-played the fool for his own ends! Eh! This brain is beating anxiously on its boundaries! How it moves up and down, and round and round! There go the table and decanters in a circle about me, faster and faster and f-fa——"

And down Mr. Fisper fell upon the floor, after in vain stretching out his hands to grasp some object to steady him.

Lord Harry Wincup prided himself on never getting so drunk that he could not walk! Great nerve and power of endurance were his boast and pride.

After Fisper had left him at the door of his room, he entered it and was about to cast himself upon his bed when through the window he saw a beautiful young woman in the park below, talking and swinging her hands, and apparently in the deepest distress.

Her singular loveliness, enhanced by her tears and grief, shone impressed upon the lord's mind with the easement and looked out. She was talking with the porter.

"What is it?" called the nobleman

"Her husband, one of the keepers, has been taken in jail, my lord, for debt, and——"

"Send her up here, George!" said the young lord. "I will hear her story and perhaps can relieve her!"

With a hesitating step she followed the porter in, who conducted her to a room adjoining the apartment from the window of which Lord Wincup had seen her. He went in to speak to her, while the porter closing the door retired.

"Ah, a discreet beautiful creature!" soliloquized the half-inebriated nobleman, as he drew near her as she stood with her apron to her eyes, at a moderate distance from him. "What is the trouble, my love?"

My husband was owing the shopkeeper, but being long ill was not able to pay, and this morning was carried off to prison, my lord. I did not know what to do; but as you are the landlord of my husband, my lord, I came to you?"

"You did perfectly right. I am charmed to see you! What is your husband's name?"

"William Edson."

"Then you are the pretty Mary Edson I've been of! I am glad to see you, Mary! I'll do what I can! Don't spoil those beautiful eyes by weeping. Dry up your tears! I will have William out of jail before the sun rise just rising set!"

"Oh, my lord, you are too good! William told me so to come to you. But I would not heed him; for I knew you would help him for he was God placed you in authority over us to do us good and be our best friend!"

"I am your best friend, my sweet Mary——"

As he spoke he laid his hand upon her fair shoulder, from which in her hurry to come to the castle she had cast the kerchief. Her slender form beneath his touch, and the rose-tints glance of his eyes, and returned a fire step.

"Pardon me, my lord!" she said, blushing and humbly, yet firmly, "I am a married wife!"

"Not the less lovely, maid or wife! Nay, do not fly! Nay, mark me, do not trifle with me, or your husband may stay in jail longer than you think! I am not in the humor to be thwarted. Give me a kiss, and I will pay you the money in hand to release your husband, my under game-keeper. The villain has no right to keep such a sweet dear in my preserves all to himself!"

"My lord, I can not consent to what would displease William! You do wrong to ask me what I have no power to bestow; for a wife's lips are sacred to her husband!"

"Do not presume to me with your pretty lips, girl! I will kiss you, my life, will you!"

As he spoke he advanced in close her in his arms, when she darted past him. In doing so he caught her by the neck, but she released herself soon, he, half tipsy, could not preserve his equilibrium, and reeling, pitched headlong to the floor!

The next moment the young wife had the room, and in a few seconds might have been seen flying across the green, towards the forest, in the depths of which was her humble cottage home, where Lord Wincup was hunt by the fall, and with a bleeding wound in his temple, caused by striking against the corner of a chair, he staggered to his bed, and rang for his servant, with deep and bitter curses upon his tongue.

SCENE II.

THE YOUNG BRIDE AND THE WIDOW.

Ten years have elapsed and we present to our readers the scene of a humble cottage.

In the door of the porch of a picturesque cottage, shaded by sycamores, sat a young woman, occupied by a running brook that wound through a noble forest on it girdled past its door, clear and sparkling, and a gentle shiver; for such beautiful objects let to be.

In the interest of a morning heart for the loved husband of her youth, had not withered the exquisite tone of her beauty. She was young, but was an air of self-retirement and sweetness, which Scripture's pencil has drawn for the holy women who yet the grace of her charms was rustic, not courtly. She was a maid-child of nature, like a flaunting dahlia of the green-house of fashion.

She was engaged in knitting a pair of boy's hose, behind her, which she had cast off, and which yours upon a low cricket, with a pencil in his hand and a sketch piece of board before him. He was engaged in making a clever drawing of his mother on the seat, with a little of grandmamma looking his occupation!

The boy is the mother's likeness fashioned by the Divine Hand, and to which the pencil of breath has lent the romantic hint, which only genius can have driven from the universal checks.

The boy's head was bent down and shaded to catch the delicate lines of her features, the spirited head with its curling brown locks, his bright black eyes alight with the inspiration of his genius, and his air of his countenance, all constitute in themselves such a picture as Raphael might have loved to see himself in his boyhood, a his happiest moments.

A little to the left of the group, and in the forehead—not too much!—very slightly! There—that is right! Oh, how beautiful you are, dear mother!"

The mother smiled, but sighed.

"Beauty, Charles," she said, "is not to be coveted in one in my position of life! To the poor, to whom others depend for support, it is a curse! Oh, I would rather my hands have been a happy wife and mother!"

"Ah, mother, beauty is a glorious and wonderful gift! Form of beauty! I will be one and enjoy it! I could not love the ill-formed or the plain! I love to sit and imagine a world ten thousand times more beautiful than this! I love to know what lovely scenes, splendid cities, gorgeous birds, brilliant skies, and magnificent scenery there is, I create by thinking! When I am a man I will be a painter, and I will create some of these beautiful pictures I will paint that I shall take out of my thoughts!"

"You have too much imagination, dear Charles! You must be a poor man! You are not born to be a great man!"

"I will make myself great then, mother," cried the lad, with a flash of fire in his eyes, and raising his glance. "When Lord Wincup returns from India, I will ask him to make me his page!"

"Do not talk of my lord!" said Mary Eaton. "I pray he may never return! You are old enough to hear what I write to say I and dislike myself to keep it. It is my duty to undeceive you. Think not of my lord! He is my enemy as he is your father's!"

"Then he shall be mine, were he twenty lords! Why was he father's?"

"Because he is a wicked and powerful man. He took dislike to William and persecuted him, and finally, by artfully getting him entrapped into a position where he appeared to have been guilty of poaching, he had him imprisoned on false accusation. It broke poor William's heart, and your father died five years ago in prison."

"I will kill Lord Wincup!" said the lad springing to it: fist and clenching his pencil as if it were a dagger

"Nay! God is his Judge! Let us leave vengeance with him!"

"I will! I wore a man! I will revenge myself on him! He shall be twice judged; here and before God!"

"Charles! This is wild talk and sinful!" The lad bowed his head in submission to his mother, but his eyes were full of the hot tears of passion. He threw the pencil from him, and, kneeling by her hand. "But why do we live here on his lands?"

"I have no other home!"

"When I get large you shall have one, dear mother!"

"I know it, my noble child! But this is the only shelter earth affords us; and by the kindness of your uncle Walter, William's brother, who is now the under-keeper in your father's place. But do not speak to him about this; for he does not understand or believe my lord's hatred of William! He believes his brother was really guilty!"

"But he was not!"

"No; and this Lord Wincup well knows; and Heaven may yet cause him to do you brother's memory justice!"

"I will make him when I am a man! Who said this wicked lord was coming home?"

"The steward! You know my lord sent in his will—for which purpose he came down—and on his high seat there, so he has been away for five years. He has left the army and is to live here in peace. He may be here to-day. Parties arrived, Charles, and it may be to-morrow!"

"Why not?"

"Because it will be dangerous to your safety."

"I don't care for my safety!"

"Then care for mine! It will kill me——"

"For your sake, then, I will forbear," he answered. "But I hope he won't come soon."

Fields passed on. Charles' fit of passionate drawing than talking about such a disagreeable subject.

The lad resumed his pencil and he just completed an admirable likeness of his mother, when a gentleman with two red-riders dashed up along the forest road. Charles rose to his feet to see who they were, as his mother, hastily rising to her feet, exclaimed with terror—

"It is Lord Wincup!"

"Nay, but this is his Mary Eaton," cried the nobleman, dismounting at the door with at the door before she could get in from its porch. "Do not fly me, Mary! By my faith! I am glad to see you! You are lovelier than ever! Why, you are only mellowed your beauty. Shame me; for I had also a wife when I saw you ten years ago, and your sweet lips are your own!"

"Oh, my lord, I hope that you have changed you for the better! Excuse me—I must retire! Come in, Charles!"

"Not so fast, my lad! I have a word for you! and a spirited boy! What! have thou a fly hand, my lad? This is the forest to be avenged on Lord Wincup be as literally accomplished!

We will wait and see.

SCENE IV.

THE REVENGE AND PUNISHMENT.

The reader is transported to the Prince Albert Gallery—as especial public exhibition for the purpose of displaying to all artists who are willing to be of native, to compete for prizes and honors.

The hall is crowded with the nobility and fashion.

Each picture are so many assembled before, eager to gaze upon it! and what remarks of surprise, and congratulation, and wonder, the fine fancy lip to lip! Others press forward to see and hear, until the picture—a large landscape of a forest, with a group of figures in the foreground—is the central object of attention.

The most distinguished are just entering. It is Prince Albert, accompanied by the Duke and members of the House of Lords. The Prince at this moment is talking with the bright, particular star of the day, Lord Wincup, who is in high spirits, and proud of the distinguished regard paid to him as publicly by his Royal Highness.

"Ah, my lord," exclaimed the Prince said:

"There seems to be an unusually attractive subject, my lord. Let us approach."

"With pleasure, your Royal Highness."

A their approach the crowd parted, and with such peculiar and significant glances at Lord Wincup. Those who had believed that they were noticing this with more honor than the Queen Consort had but an expression in their eyes that he did not like. He heard his name in fifty voices, but could not distinguish a word, however, as every one bowing to the crowd that he did not look at the picture. His attention was drawn to it by the Prince.

"Bless me, my Lord, who has painted this piece? What a fine picture!"

"Perfect! It is he himself!" uttered a score of voices. "That can it mean?"

Lord Wincup looked at the picture. It was a large one, and he saw the life, the forest, the horror and amazement, he beheld the forest on its outskirts, the outlines of the victim, which some were marauding, while others were carrying out the furniture. He beheld himself, seated upon his horse, with his sword already placed upon the scene of outrage. The fires of the widow and of her son, the terror of his wife, and upon a flower (a speaking likeness) was driving them from beneath the burning tree. The heavens in the picture were black with a tempest, and across the scenes flashed the lightnings, which revealed the terrible, pallid face of the child actor in the scene. The whole picture was eloquent, and told its own story.

The Earl of Wincup stood before it, pale, and trembling in every limb. It seemed to him as if a judge upon the Doom'sday book had been opened, and presented to his appalled gaze beforehand. He stood himself in the presence of God, and all the men of the Prince Royal. It seemed no picture, but the reality itself!

"What means this, my Lord?" said the Prince.

"I know not! Some enemy hath done this!" he stammered; and as people were beginning to look at with confusion and shame, that he lost his self-possession, and sank trembling to the floor.

At this every one cried:

"There is something in it! Who can solve it?"

SCENE V.

THE PUNISHMENT.

The artist, Charles Eaton, sat at his easel, when a visitor was announced.

It was Lord Wincup!

He had guessed the unknown artist, for the calling of the picture was read! He came to him humbly and supplicantly, for the Prince had believed the tale the picture had told the world, and Lord Wincup was ordered to leave the court in disgrace.

"You have come, Sir Charles," (we forgot to say that he had been knighted by the Queen for his merit) he said, "to ask pardon of me! I will not pay you for your picture in the exhibition."

"I have no pardon to demand, Lord Wincup. Revenge is dear, dearer than gold!" And the artist went on with his work.

"I will give you ten thousand pounds to withdraw it from the exhibition!" said the Earl, pale as death.

"It is placed there by the committee, and must remain for the period of the season!"

"Sir Charles Eaton, have pity upon me! You have had your revenge upon me! Consider what that accursed picture is your heart, till your hand gives the skill to transfer it from your memory to the canvass. Remove it, sir, and I will give you double my offer!"

"No, my Lord! The picture was painted for this exhibition."

"Will nothing move you?" cried the Earl, in despair. "If it stands there I am infamous."

"No, sir. It is your judgment. It is but one scene of what will have to meet your eyes of your acts on earth! If you cannot endure to see this revived, how will you stand before the reproduction hereafter of every act of your wicked life?"

The Earl drew a pistol, and shot at the heart of the artist. The ball was fatal, and struck the picture of his mother, which hung above it. The next moment a second bullet aved crashing through the nobleman's forehead by his own hand!

The trial of the murdered murderer and suicide was now briefly run up to its judgment from the "Book of Remembrance," as leaf of which, presented to his gaze on earth, had driven him to despair.

It was said in the papers that the Earl had died of apoplexy. The Prince alone knew the whole secret. The public generally, and we may imply that the ambitious Earl's true character having been exposed by the painting, he had committed suicide to escape the scorn of the world's eye.

The next day thousands flocked to the exhibition to see the picture, but it had been removed privately in the night. The can had justly avenged the dead and slain, and the picture disappeared forever!

GRANDMOTHERS.

BY GIOSEGNINA HERBERT.

Even in a city "Grandmother's House" is a beloved and sacred spot. And when it is for the country words fail to describe its deep, deep pastoral and sentimental charm. It must be experienced to be understood. To come, after years of struggle, noise, and confusion, to a long and quiet waiting strain upon every bodily and spiritual power, and to sit down and receive the caress of love and the cordial and care, under the roof where you (and your mother before you) dozed and dreamed through many an hour of happy childhood, is, indeed, an exhaling "into rest." It is enough to make one forget even the world, and all the world contains, and forever from the world, abiding for a few serene, enchanted days upon healed the cradle of one's infancy, comforting he amid her journey ends, and there to be contentedly sure to-day, and to-morrow, and to-day, and to-morrow, and to-day, and to-morrow, and

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AN ARTICLE FOR PARENTS.

...he education of the mind has come to be regarded, in our country, as a matter of course. We believe that all men—and each individual man—ought to be educated; that our Heavenly Father has given the education of the people, and the sound and enlightened public opinion that demand it, and power of human mind to be educated as possible; that the immortal part of humanity, for our Creator, must be developed to the most, or range too widely the limitless realm of knowledge; and that in the boundless duty of those who possess these blessings, to aid others in their attainment. Such principles as these, to whose truth we are well persuaded, and which we are in the constant habit of asserting, with reference to the education of the mind, apply in a far higher sense to the education of the heart, and to the moral training, which is the duty of religious institution. The former is not complete without the latter; for a system which educates the mind only for time, and ignores all preparation for eternity, is without doubt, at once imperfect and unnatural. But, in a truer view of the matter, mental training without moral culture is positively dangerous, and possibly destructive. Some men glorify Mind and Reason, as if they were almost good to be worshipped; and talk of Education, as if it were the only and adequate regenerating power of the world and the human race. The former is a mistake; there is an insufficient moral basis; it must be sanctified by divine truth, or it will become a mere instrument of sinning. To store the memory with knowledge—to train the understanding to discipline the reason; to draw forth all the wondrous energies of the human mind—and then leave the whole world to the ruin of the man himself, the injury of his fellow-men, and the hindrance of the cause of God in the world—is a mistake of which we better to leave those powers dormant and unseen forever, for better to be an ox than a man, or a savage a weapon from it for the hand of the evil one.

In the midst of marble, just fresh brought from the quarry, and ready to be fashioned by the sculptor's chisel, there is but a thousand possible conceptions of beauty or deformity. If the right artist and the right instrument are brought to work upon it, many most fresh and a fine bitness will spring in, and many evil passions, or a degradity, malice, and every evil passion, or a countenance reviving with the light of a morning star, and clothed in the loveliness of an inhabitant of heaven. The photographer takes the burnished or metallic plate, and prepares it for the impress of the sunlight. But it will receive whatever is presented with him, whether upon that sensitive and receptive surface shall be stamped features of a person with beauty that the beholder shall gaze upon it with pleasure, and remember it with delight, or features to be distorted with passion, and blurred with vice and evil, that we shall turn away disgusted from the sight. Even so is the mind subjected as yet to the processes of education, dogmatic sensation the possibilities of good and evil, and unlimited evil; and just according as holy or unholy instruments do the work, may that mind become an angel or a fiend. So plain is it that, apart from the influences of nature, we must have moral and religious training.

CHOLERA.

The premonitions of cold and autumnal decomposition seem to be a pleasant harbinge for more people. At any rate, they favor the approaching cholera. They are always rendering their health and enriching upon the "soft confession of the age." A number of a definition it is then a positive sign that cholera is on the eve of "turning up," or "curling in," or both. They can see no signs of promise in the innumerable activities and developments of the age. All is blear, and black, and cheerless to them. They are simply premonishing manners of coming, undoubtedly. They are the most positive of all bore, sure, and should be exterminated. This is the opposite sign. It is full of life, progress, and goodness. It is rich in present feelings and glorious with future promise.

THE BENCH AND THE PRESS.

It is impossible to consider some of our law proceedings, and to escape being struck with the unfavorable feeling which is displayed in them, by the dispensers of the justice of the country, towards whatever concerns the press. On occasion, instead of being regarded as the overflowings of a pure and vivifying stream, bearing health and refreshment through the land—here and there perhaps bearing a trifling sediment, but fertilizing and rendering productive the whole surface of the country—we see an aggressive spirit in the high law. There is a uniform tendency to say something in jurisor repeating it on the most trivial opportunity available for the purpose—and that tendency being generally grounded on the most intolerable misapprehension of the true character and position of the profession and practice of Law. There seems a constant effort to search for free spirit, and to confine it to the most narrow and petty regulations. Could those who instigate by either impulse, since against the press carry the matter in their own way, nothing would ever be allowed to appear in print but what was literally provable or public.

The examination of public men and their measures, the pursuit of truth, the arraignment of evils too subtle for the common reach, the guard of the legislature to restrain, must cease at the citizens of lawyers, and be confined exclusively to the formalities of the most narrowing and subordinate essential of human pursuits. The press, then, is partly guaranteed by the opposite characters of the press and of the law. It is a power which is not subject to human action—to dead, and not a thought. The press belongs to mind and to imagination, and it can not be jailed of or will be in fact. It is within the empire of intellect, and its range cannot be limited by politics, nor by law, and satisfaction rectified by human jurisprudence. Through an excess of zeal the judges sometimes err. The errors of the press can only be satisfied by the operation of reason and feeling. Even the very limited empire as respects mind: that of the law is not to be touched. The lawyer is a mere pounder of the institutions of the legislature: he is his agent to effect certain limited objects. It is his business to listen to and act upon the interpretation of genius, nor always even of sound reason. Written laws confine him to the very letter of his duty. How can it be expected he should be otherwise than he is, when his is too short time to penetrate through the cloud of invention and sophistry in which the magic of the press has been laboriously enveloped?

The power of the press is also an object of his envy. Its property of influencing large bodies of men, of moving mankind en masse, is visual, and legislative; and it is the very soul of liberty, it has a tendency to enlarge instead of restrain it, and that in the most beautiful way. It can, therefore, hardly be wondered at, that the feeling of jealousy should be excited towards it, arising from the habits as well as nature of lawyers. But it is by no means for laws that it is prudent to exhibit it on every occasion.

THE BEST DINNER SAUCE.

"A dinner," says Dr. Kitchiner, "may be good, or it may be very ugly with or a few friends with me, some mother is ever a dinner—and also dinner without."

Reading at table would perhaps hardly suit us gladiators. We are apt to be too serious, or at sometimes prefer stupid and wearisome frivolity to the least appearance of book. But something ought be done to redeem from utter inanity and vapidity the hours usually consumed at the dinner table. We can hear at dinner, and a half hour each of breakfast and tea. Reading is not to be done by strangers, even with an American, notorious as we are, with the zeal of the world, for taking up and down, and hurrying off to work again. That is two hours a day, two days and a half in the month, and a whole month in the year! In other words, one-twelfth of our time is spent at the table, and that, too, when for the most part it is the most irksome. This is by no means to be looked upon as a trifling matter, by which effective and rational interchange of minute good offices all are made, good for the whole, and beautiful and unnatural. But, in a truer view of the matter, mental training without moral culture is positively dangerous. They often glorify Mind and Reason, as if they were almost good to be worshipped; and talk of Education, as if it were the only and adequate regenerating power of the world and the human race. The former is a mistake; there is an insufficient moral basis; it must be sanctified by divine truth, or it will become a mere instrument of sinning. To store the memory with knowledge—to train the understanding to discipline the reason; to draw forth all the wondrous energies of the human mind—and then leave the whole world to the ruin of the man himself, the injury of his fellow-men, and the hindrance of the cause of God in the world—is a mistake of which we better to leave those powers dormant and unseen forever, for better to be an ox than a man, or a savage a weapon from it for the hand of the evil one.

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FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

A LEAF NOT FROM THE "BOOKS OF THE OPERA."

You might as well set me down for a heathen for I don't like the opera, and what is more, I don't intend to like it. Why should I? I can't do, else why do they laugh and whisper through the performance, and twist their mouths in such an odd way, and make their mouths, and arrange their heads and make eyes, and do anything but what they profess to come there for—viz., to listen to the music. It is all a sham; they go there because it is a good place to show off—because there is a handsome men and pretty women there—because it is the fashion. Shall I be a victim to the fashion? Shall I be a martyr to the opera? Shall I sit and sit and sit and sing rackets about. I never touch one. If the music is good for anything, I take it in with all my faculties; if it is bad enough to be forced to listen to it, without losing yourself to it, and if it is neither, it is dead to me. I like the opera when the music appealed to me; when sense could be found in it. I like it when I can when I was dying to throw my arms round somebody's neck—and anybody's—and cry for mercy. That's what I call music; but that's the operation of sweet melody. Seriously, I go there at the cost of a seven hours' sit. But a man-hang crack, an ear-splitting squeak, a bass-drum-and-cymbal crash, and whether the eyes fat, red-faced prima-donnas trying to get out of their throats, or the fine, lean, lank, and especially when it takes all day-light to get from one recitative to the end of the Lord's Prayer.

Spite of that, I maintain that I love music. I don't like music—more's the pity I can't—but about "Verdi," and "Rossini," and "Bellini," and "Donizetti," and "Meyerbeer," and "Mozart," I like a brook's ripple; I like the shivering leaf music in the tall cool-tops in the woods; I like the music of the birds in the spring, and I don't want my ears deafened, and my eyes put out, and my sensibility; and all to be sacrificed on the order of the Academy of Music to Fourteenth street, and back again. That's why I don't go to the opera one time in ten. There—now you have it.

FANNY FERN.

DID YOU EVER SEE THEM!

There are people who get up in the morning for the express purpose of making somebody uncomfortable before the day is done. They generally plinch upon some sunny-faced, happy, singing baby-boy, and, with the utmost malice, they set the machines of life, moving in the blue ether of his heaven, and the shadow of the angels that hover about his head. Then they proceed to make themselves a little worse than they were before. They bear down, with maimed wing, to flutter in the dust, and, as they rise, they gather the sunbeams in their hands, and throw them upon the delicious music to this vulture; there is one other person in the world as uncomfortable as himself. They have been in one! I can prove their love was out of order! It was clearly a piece of unsanctioned food, and the effects are the same. Sighing and turning, the sunbeam all gone, the cloth of heaven overcast with clouds, they look about your persecutor standing by, turning you over and over with his foot, as if he hoped to find enough left for a fresh attack.

You have seen them, and I dare say; superficial observers, revolve bowing and snickering you take the holiest purgatory. Now an honest man, if there be such in one! I can prove there nearly-omitted, Waite-Paine-and-Hyena wretch, broken thought, and the sensitive, on a small scale, M. Vatemaire's scheme, offering a sort of universal and catalogue.

All this intercourse as table brings about unconsciously, and, in some cases, unwillingly. But it might do us a much higher degree, by a tone of conversation at once elevating and refining to the fall, and the more elevated, of course the more various and attractive. Many persons are the slaves of a foreigner who dined one day with Phidias. Phidias's dinners were very pleasant as the guests, and they had one day of glory.

Much depends on the starting of good topics by an eminent writer. It is a fault of ours to be too fond to make his hops at dinner with a thesis on Roman antiquities, Egyptian hieroglyphics, or the free and easy way Mr. Wilberforce used to pass the time of the evening after dinner when he came to England. Madame de Staël said he was absolutely the most humorous man she ever met in her own set. He has let us into the secret of the matter in his diary. To occupy his position in society as a literary man, and to make a point not yet to "redeem the time," was with him a matter of conscience. Here are his own words: "I invite members, as he called them—subjects of fresh and striking interest to the company, and had several of table, and lift up the conversation out of that small common place which is the bane of society among cultivated people. So that the brilliant and animated talk which distinguished the table of Sir James Mackintosh, was, like Sheridan's, not the result of method—'dinner-men,' as Moore calls it, more the result of premeditation than it seemed.

AIM HIGH.

It is the sun that makes the sun. Without an aim there is nothing, so far as the utter destination of force, weight, and even individuality among men can reduce them to nothing. Only the strongest and coverts of the world sweep him the way and feet, without aims or suits to begin to begin to guide him. If he is not speedily wrecked or run aground. It is "never by good luck, but good management." We have never heard a more touching confession of utter weakness and misery than these words from one singularly blest with the endowments of nature and of providence: "My life is aimless!" This book, young man, of an awake life. Take heed, too, of a low and selfish aim. A well constructed and generous purpose gives vigor, directness, and perseverance to all man's efforts. A well-disciplined intellect, character, influence tranquility, and cheerfulness within, success and honor without, are its sure concomitants. Whatever a man's talents and advantage may be, with no aim, or a low one, he is weak and despicable; and he cannot be otherwise than respectable and influential with a high one.

WINTER AND ITS WANTS.

Suddenly on the Autumn may ride out its career, the cold, biting Winter will set surely come in every, and in even now close at hand. Winter, shutting out the dreams of green fields and nodding woods, the brooklet and the birds-song, and all the gay belongings of the soul-time and heart-cheer, and with its wailing of the earth's "sullen loneliness." Winter will bring new wants to all, and a time of new suffering to the poor. Many who are now comfortable in the sunshine, relative to the necessaries and comforts, carriers of the snow, will soon find a subtle and bitter foe in the "whistling frost," and of cold and snow—and will have to creep shivering to whatever shelter may offer.

The Methodist, the world over, can by the thought escape the severer burthens of Winter; but there are other multitudes, whose improvidence during the kindlier seasons makes the Winter doubly severe. All such, if they were wise, would include the "busy bee" and the provident squirrel, which improve the days of sunshine and foliage, and gathered well, to lodge themselves against the waste and barrenness of Winter. But the improvidence are even given to wishing; their common proverb is, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Their knowledge of what is most needful is small, and by the time they are not absolutely driven to the wall—then all their reputations and reproves are unavailing. It is a strange fact, that the poorest classes, everywhere, are the least forethoughtful and improvident. It would seem often as though a kind, passive fatalism was the inspiration of their lives. But such being the inevitable case, it is the more behoves all those who are habitually taxed, or who are especially to aid the poor and needy, to so arrange and distribute their aid that it may reach those who are most worthy of it, and the greatest degree. In our city there is an endless call upon benevolence as well as an endless circumstance of want, in behalf of poverty and mendicity, and it is to the honor of humanity that the call is most cheerfully answered. We have many supposed public, or pecuniary private charity, more generously than ever seen—not only to relieve the rigors of Winter, but through all seasons of the year. But there is much of benevolence still that might be more effectively rendered, with no more cost than little more trouble to the giver. Each one who aids help the needy within his or her immediate vicinity, or who makes circumstances by personal inquiry, is assured. By this course thousands of "professional" and not needy beggars will be shut out. It will give many happy hours to the poor, and not only to the poor, but to the rich. There are many complaints to misspend the money it gives in charity. By practising these two rules, there will be no such complaint, and the poor supplied with the same means. Winter is so near, that the consideration of both its wants is welcome to the poor is a matter of Christian and human duty.

HEROISM IN LITERATURE.

"Peace hath her victories no less than war," is the Sacred Scripture applies of a philanthropist and profound mind. The honesty, energy and self-denying course of Sir Walter Scott on the loss of noble toil which had enriched the great author, is a fine illustration of the truth. Within a moment's warning, found himself moneyless and heavily responsible. Instead of despair, he at once, through, motives of honorableness, failed, to which was bankrupted. Apprehensions of age he had thrown on his shoulders an appalling load of debt to the amount of six hundred thousand dollars!—not one cent of which had been incurred by himself, or for himself. He declared that during any composition with his creditors; he refused any aid from his friends; he would not listen to any advances from the public—that public which he had so long amused, instructed and elevated in its hours of leisure; but at once gave up his own sufficient possessions, and began a new literary career for the purpose of paying off his load—a million of dollars. He allowed himself not a single luxury for recreation, but morning, noon and night worked, worked, worked. In a few weeks appeared his "Life of Napoleon," a work of enormous labor, extension, several of his well-known works. Already more than two hundred thousand dollars had been paid. At this rate of working, says one of Scott's most elegant and brilliant critics, it was evident that the whole debt would soon be cancelled. But, about this time, he was attacked with paralysis and suffering labor. He had a stroke of paralysis. He was ordered to Italy. The government placed a frigate at his disposal (noble deed) and he went to Italy. Scott's health began to improve, but in less than a year the hero returned to Scotland to die. His task works were paid.

Such is the story of a heroism equal to any. We have no words of praise for such heroism. It is a good cause. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you are in trouble.

PRIZE FIGHTS

A prize fight is the most mean thing in the world —more's the pity. It even has its advantages and high gifts. Even a second-class prize fight at a time relieves the city of much of its ruffianism. Concealed deadly weapons are removed, to be sure, house pleasant to contemplate. It gives our country friends a chance to see our vice-ridden revolutionary and to feel more sincerely sorry for us. It gives a chance to "brutal scene," about which we hear so much, never have anything to do with ourselves anybody's business, simply because nobody who has any morals or sensibility ever goes near such a brutal scene.

DRESS YOUR CHILDREN WARM.

This is one of the most dangerous seasons for children. Colds and coughs are now sadly fostered upon them, often resulting in consumption and premature death. Therefore, dress them warm. Let their necks and throats be well protected. Let your boys' pantaloons reach to the instep. Don't dress them in mockery trousers reaching only to the knee or middle of the leg, and leaving their limbs exposed to the chilling air. Do not sacrifice children's health to the gratification of a silly, or elder's taste; but dress them with the paramount view of comfort and safety.

WIT AND WISDOM.

SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR—DISTINCTION WITHOUT THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

The poring pedant, who will shake his thirst only from antiquity, will find that it already with water as deep that some of them were not worth the digging, and that many of them they are not worth the cleansing. An ugly animal that he will scour up more dainty than he were worthy to be devoured by the wild beast, and will, the approached by the living sources of truth.

He who pleases himself without injuring his neighbor, is quite as likely to please half the world as he who merely strives to please the whole of it. He also enjoys a better chance of a majority in his favor, since, upon all equal occasions, he will be more inclined to his own tastes than to those of others.

The Southern Messenger has an article denouncing Tom, the theme and spirit of the piece and written. A great many rapid writers have written against time, and that men and times have been ignored at, and almost every thing, we fear, denied to.

The dispensation of justice may spring from the driest of destinations over the fairest creations, and religion may be the most unlovely thing in the world, if we expect to know anything about it, we must have actual experience.

A couple of gentlemen, both of whom were recently turned out of office, are running against each other in Alabama for Governor. The contest so far bears a political phrase, but their friends, probably they will run each one.

A letter from China says that the Chinese have discovered the art of making artificial ivory, good and fit together; our virtues would be proud if our faults were ivory-set—not only to soften the rigors of our vices embossed by our virtues.

Country cures are seldom proceeds from pride; from our desire to get rid of an uneasy sensation or from the hope of fame. Cures from the last motive are rare, and are to be avoided.

"I will buy you a wagon," said one spendthrift to another, "if you will discover some new virtue." "Agreed," to the, you could always lend me enough.

A writer in the Literary Messenger says: "If you have a friend, tell him of his faults in a kind manner." Certainly, but you must have a friend before you can tell him of his faults.

There is no castle upon the earth so strong that it may not be taken; but one castle in the air may find defiance to our conquering arms.

The New York papers make mention of a policeman who was shot in the leg while on duty in a disorderly house. He was not shot at the time.

A man's happiness is said to hang upon a thread, but it may be noticed that the main interest sometimes depends upon a single hair.

Jenny Neal says that the eagle "has a commanding eye." We have noticed that a tradesman or anybody else should keep his occupy than that he should be "eye to business."

Isn't the wind getting round? and is not the sky beginning to look like rain? Answer us quickly, for we keep caught.

There's no fun in going a-fishing when the fish won't bite.

The fact that a man's word is as a diamond is no reason why he should be hard to break.

The next best thing to force in speaking is force in not speaking.

Many writers lay claim to correctness, who are incorrect both in style and matter.

If you wish for success, never look to sorry people.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A Mrs. Hutchinson, living in Broome street, in that city, left her baby, two months of age, sleeping on the floor, while she went out to get a pail of water. On her return she found that the child was not there. She was, she found it dead, with a large cut belonging to the mother, lying by the side of the child. There was no mark of violence on the infant, and it is supposed by the coroner, who held an inquest, that the mother, in her sad grief, killed it by "holding its breath."

The Board of Aldermen of Cincinnati have granted between Monterey and the "Seven Hay" seems to have been a very pleasant one. The government placed at the an alarming degree. Brush lights are occurring in all sections of the city, and the people are becoming alarmed. Two of the new lights were put up on Main street last night, and one of them was taken off. Another's name was taken off.

A Lady in Cincinnati, who has been married three times, and successively outlived each husband, is married again now that she is a widow. Her present husband is a young man of twenty-three, the husband being fifteen and the wife fourteen years older, and the wife, therefore, is in such danger, that she can not be married to the husband of a widow.

A Man from Maine writing from the interior of Texas, says that cotton produces there are commonly from a bale to a bale and a half to the acre, and that the cotton staples in length, and as good as they are big.

If it is indeed a proof of the value of experience in such matters, that luck got to insure one is called by everybody, then the Insurance Company is the most successful degree imaginable.

It is said that the Baptist churches of this city have offered clergymen, the celebrated London preacher, ten thousand dollars per year to come and preach one year in New York and preach three times a week for six months.

Mr. Joseph Lamb, of Rockland county, has recently set cultivation in that city, who amused himself by making a pair of boots for a centipede, and succeeded even in both.

Miss Mary Jane Wade broke into the Connecticut State Prison a short time since, and stole from the warden's office a pair of boots, and escaped with several other prisoners' breakfasts.

Mr. Jacob Beard, who has recently lifted in Sullivan county in this State. If there are any more beats in that county, the editor wishes they would advertise the keys out of the woods.

A coffee man recently married in Hamburg, S. C., whose especially remembered in jail, where the man was confined for drunkenness and the woman for stealing pork.

A Havana (Cuba) paper says that a lady who had long been bereft of reason, was restored to sanity by the electric shock of the machine especially which recently occurred in that city.

There are at present rumors of "gold regions" having been found in Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee, to say nothing of the Pacific coasters.

INGRATITUDE.

BY MRS. L. B. SIGOURNEY.

"There sooa a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand."

The simple herdsmen who beheld
Still shrieking rain and blast,
A fire in sheer the shipwreck'd town
That on their shores were cast.

Astonished, from the genial fires
Behold a reptile start,
And fiercely on a stranger's hand
The fatal venom dart.

But mere astonish'd still, behold
The man who felt the sting
Shake lightly off the viper fiend,"
Without a mortal pang.

And there they knelt, as new struck hand,
Upon that rocky soil,
And all their hearts threw fond
The stranger as a god.

Oh friends, who cower in your hearts
Beneath the storm of fate,
Dispersing benefits on all
Who by your orbit move,

When crowd your sacred household hearth
To crave the tortuous lair,
Take heed, amid that clustered group
What lurks to work you harm.

Lest, spider-like by the inspiring flame,
Even yet that harbored hand,
The viper of ingratitude
Shall fasten on your hand.

For ye, alas! might fail to wield
The vivifying thunders there,
Which, in the lightning of your wrath
And feel its lasting burn.

RICHARD HOFFMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

PETER MANDLE PURSUED.

It is no part of our creed that sorrow destroys either the physical or intellectual existence of its victims. Like the mildew on the flower, it may rob life of its freshness—palsy the energies of both heart and brain, changing the former into a living sepulchre, whose tenants are useless regrets for the past, or cold speculations as bitter as they are vain.

Under any circumstances, the loss of his grandson would have been a terrible blow to the feelings of Mr. Bently; but, coming as it did, at the moment of success, when Richard had succeeded in unmasking the real character of Carus Kwan and proving the integrity of his father, it fell with double violence.

Still it did not kill. Death perhaps would have been mercy; it rendered the future a blank, cheerless as that sea.

Whose watery bane so long thing,
Strength every by the sea-bird's wing,
A lonely ocean, a desert rock,
A barren waste, a solitude.

The letter, written by his wife, added to the bitterness of the old merchant's self-reproaches; for, whilst appealing to his affection in behalf of their only child, it amply justified the extraordinary part she had taken in giving her consent to his daughter's marriage with the father of our hero. In the solitude of his chamber he paused and re-perused it still every word became engraved with terrible distinctness upon his memory.

As it surrounded that last hitherto been doubtful to our readers, we consider the time has arrived for imparting its contents.

It ran thus:

"I am dying of a strange malady, which has baffled the skill of my physicians, and in this world we shall never meet again. Rachel will have no mother long ere you be glad in her behalf; and even my mourning may be a reproach, for having consented to what the world may consider an ill-assorted marriage. Richard, I did more than consented, *I advised it.*

"We have frequently accused me of a prejudice against your nephew Caros. Shortly after your departure for Paris I received a proof—I repeat the word *proof*—that he was not only ungrateful to you, his benefactor, but a black conspirator. Unhappily, I dare not lay that proof before you; he bound me by an oath at the moment I detected—oh! that I could tell you all! but my lips are sealed. On the word of the wife who loved you, who never yet deceived you, who must one answer to that tribunal where every thought is naked, I have spoken truthfully.

"I know the partiality with which you adhere to a plan once formed. I know, also, of your design of uniting Rachel with her cousin Carus, and deem not ebb the happiness of our only child. Forgive me, Richard; do not let your anger fall on the head of Rachel. Let the memory of her dead mother plead for her! Richard, you were no father defender."

From these passages it was plain that Mrs. Bently had detected Carus, then, in the act of plundering his uncle and benefactor, and been bound by him, perhaps, as the means of preventing a yet greater crime, not merely to denounce him. As to the means of the unfortunate lady's death, the dentists which veiled them may never, perhaps, be entirely raised.

After the perusal of such a letter the feelings of the merchant entirely changed. In reality, he had little if anything to forgive. The system of suspicion previously shown towards his nephew had led him to misery. The long years of agony attending from the loss of her born might have been spared his daughter.

When the storm rage reflected on these things, it is not to be wondered that he fled to Middlewood from the sight of Rachel's tears, for conscience told him he had been the cause of her grief.

Mr. Bently was seated in the library, listening to the moment which the gamekeeper, Fletcher, had brought of the attempted murder at the Home Farm, when his faithful confidential servant entered the room. The old man seemed greatly agitated, and yet a careful observer might have noted that an expression of hope, if not joy, mingled with his trepidation.

"What is it?" inquired his master. "I did not ring."

"I know you did not, sir," replied the domestic, "but a visitor has arrived at the hall."

"From London?"

"I believe to come from London last," was the cautious reply; "but he has lately been in India."

The murderer sighed as the word India—his dearest hope, as he believed, were buried there.

"Show my old friend Curry, no doubt," he said. "I will see the gentleman."

"Certainly, sir."

Still the man hesitated, and made no attempt to leave the library.

"Did you not hear me?" inquired his master, mildly.

"I don't think the gentleman comes from Mr. Curry," observed the man; "in fact, I am sure he does not. I have seen him here before, when——"

The speaker stopped short as if afraid to proceed. The grandfather of our hero marked his agitation, and a singular feeling crept over him.

"Proceed," he said; "I can hear anything now."

"When the two young gentlemen were staying at the hall, sir."

"Harsh!" exclaimed Mr. Bently.

"I believe that is the gentleman's name, sir."

"Admit him instantly," said his master; "perhaps he brings me some token or last request from my poor boy."

The domestic hastily withdrew, leaving the merchant a prey to the wildest surmise. Intelligence had reached him that all the party had perished in the attack upon the solitary cave; still he was far from anticipating the happiness in store for him.

When the footman entered as library, he was much struck by the change which little more than a year had made in the appearance of Mr. Bently; his iron-gray hair had become perfectly white, and his features had much of that expression which we commonly see on any relative which they have characterized them.

"You come to us, I hear of morning," observed the old man, extending his hand to him, "I might almost say from the dead. He has had a wonderful and existence—been made a bank. Who would have thought?" he added, "that it was so hard a thing to die?"

Marsh smiled himself at silence; for a man of the world, never had he felt so embarrassed at the sight of such hopeless misery.

"You may tell me all," resumed the speaker; "describe to me my grandson's death—I can bear it—my heart can feel no second blow. 'Tis strange," he added, with unnatural calmness, "how philosophy increases with age upon us."

"I did not witness the events your father," replied his visitor, deeply moved.

"That is Richard, sir," he continued, you accompanied him upon that fatal journey which——"

THE JOYOUS MEETING.

Despite his boasted fortitude, the firmness of Mr. Bently grew weak, and he shed bitter tears of mingled regret and affection.

"You no what a philosopher I am," he said, mournfully. "What a wayward thing the heart is," he continued, after a pause. "Who can comprehend it? For years mine remained dead to the pleadings of nature—the sorrows of my only child—and yet the loss of my grandson has broken it!"

"It was some time," observed the lieutenant, "before I could bring myself to believe in the death of my young charge, the intelligence being anything but precise upon the subject—so many rumors were flying about—one day believed, the next contradicted. The early report, I received to wish that part of the country where it was reported to have taken place."

"That was kind," said the merchant, "but no more than I expected from you. You continued yourself?"

"Nearly so."

There was something in the tone in which the words were uttered, and the look that accompanied it, which startled the old man, and the first faint gleam of hope broke upon his heart.

Slowly he repeated the word—"*Nearly so.*" "Is it not then a reality? Is there a chance—a possibility that he still lives? Speak, do not torture me by a suspense kindly meant, but more than I have strength to bear."

"The body was never found."

Mr. Bently clasped his hands, in mute but eloquent gratitude.

"Positively, he may be a prisoner," added his visitor, who misunderstood the gesture, "I will not to no other agent, but proceed myself to India."

"Consider, my friend, the distance—your great age."

"I feel neither," interrupted the merchant. "There is a chasm of again beholding him, and I can young again—strong in affection and in hope. You will accompany me? I am sure you will."

"Willingly, most willingly!" replied the latter, with feet, as my will, it was best to end the agonizing scene," *should the journey prove necessary.*"

"It shall be undertaken this day week, then," was the reply.

Several hours elapsed before he was summoned to rejoin them, when he found the merchant engaged in writing from the recent agitation he had undergone; but still much stronger than he expected. The expression of hopeless sorrow had already given way to one of deep content, if not of joy.

"Richard has told me all," were the first words the old man uttered; "I shall soon have a dear child more to love."

In these few graceful words did Mr. Bently convey his appreciation of the conduct of Lilian Lee. He also announced his intention of leaving Middlewood on the following day for London.

"Too soon!" he repeated, in answer to an observation of the lieutenant's, hinting that his strength had already been overtaxed; "not an hour, not a minute. Remember, there are other hours to day; unto must not prove a selfish joy. I have no longer any cause for remaining secluded from the world," he continued, with benevolent excitement; "my heart feels strong again. I long to see him in his mother's arms; then, and then only, shall I cease to regret the past."

Impatient as Richard did for the meeting with his parents, he entertained his grandfather to postpone his intention at least for a day or two longer, fearing the old man's health might give way under so much excitement.

"Remember," he added, "we shall be in time for Christmas."

Something in the mention of Christmas-day appeared to please the merchant, not as it once seemed.

It was not till Mr. Bently had been persuaded to retire to rest that Richard Hoffman and the lieutenant returned to the Home Farm to see after their friends and inquire the fate of Andrew Sikes. The steward was alive.

"I trust I shall never witness such another death-bed," observed Jack Spratley, who appeared very contrary part. "And yet I repeat I did so," he added, "from it may prove of service to one who is dear to you. The parchment which Mike's companion is crime carried off with him was the long-concealed codicil to the will of the former tenant of Holdyers, bequeathing the estate equally between the issue of the two brothers Norman and Allan, in the event of the former dying without male issue."

"This is most important," observed the lieutenant, "and will suggest a key to the mystery of Lady Boothroyd. The deed must be recovered at any sacrifice."

"As for the wealth of my late unworthy relative," added the nephew, "he has done something to atone by bequeathing it to Lillian."

That was your suggestion, I feel convinced," exclaimed our hero, struck by his disinterestedness.

"What better could he do with it?" replied the latter, blushing. "My mind was fully made up to accept a shilling of it. The same objection," he added, "applies to the property at Stockport, whom he has so deeply wronged."

Two eight hours after the events we have described, there was in the servants' hall a most accordingly puzzled by letters from Meldrum Park. The writer, of course, was Richard Hoffman, the Mangles. Never in the course of his life had the young man felt so completely at a loss to comprehend his employer. He perused the missive which filled it nearly half a dozen times, and then drew it forth again to be perused a third, and even a fourth time.

"Dear me, dear me!" he muttered to himself, what can Richard mean by writing in such an incomprehensible way. I am to order the carriage to get his town house ready to receive him in two days, that's plain enough. I can understand his being tired of the country, but what can he mean by——"

"I intend to give a large party on Christmas-day, and have despatched the invitations long here. I must trust to you to see that arrangements are made on a scale commensurate with the wealth of your master."

"What after?" demanded Peter, to himself, as he drew the letter upon the table before him; "I love can any man in his senses wish to ask us to entertain him?"

Again he took up the offending sheet of paper, and finished reading its contents.

"Congratulate me, my valued friend." I am no longer a lovely baby. It is true, handsome comes to me, but I am content with it.

"What am I to congratulate him about?" exclaimed Peter, in a fresh fit of anger. "He was fortune enough before, and no accession of wealth—even to a prince—can make him happier. Congratulate me indeed! I must be mad! but it all comes of living in the country. Men never get such flighty ideas who live in town."

By slow degrees a dreadful suspicion began to dawn upon the mind of our friend. Peter Mangles it was neither more nor less than that his employer had got married. So strong did the conviction grow upon him, that several, certainly not very complimentary and even incoherent, epithets, upon which the words "Old donkey," or ones which resembled very like them, escaped his lips.

"Married! to be married!" he repeated, "nothing but marriage or bankruptcy can explain Richard's writing such an unintelligible letter. The old sin, pride, has been at work again. I know he regretted that Mary was not a boy—as if she could help it. Married! desolation the richer—how unfeeling of having an heir to leave his estate. Well, well, some sordid creature has entangled him in her meshes—a widow, most likely a widow."

So engrossed and upset was the old clerk by this idea, that he absolutely made a wrong entry in the ledger, a thing which had only occurred once before during the many years he had kept the books. His half-pay, however, did not proceed for attending to the directions of his employer.

Richard, too, had received a letter, in which her father invited her, together with her husband and Mary, to dine with him at his residence in London on Christmas-day.

"Let me see you wear your long-forgotten smile," added the writer, in the concluding paragraph. "I have a present both for you and my grandchildren."

"A present," sighed the mother of our hero; "would, alas—alas! what sorrow at this time might they not have spared me!"

CHAPTER XCIX.

CHRISTMAS.

How chilling is the aspect of December, with its gloomy skies and piercing cold, its withered leaves, rustling in their path, like mourners over a graveyard, to remind us that another year is about to pass away—a drop in the vast ocean of eternity!

Apart from the religious influences of the season, old Christmas would be dreary to the most social feelings, ties and sympathies which make the domestic hearth with happy kindred face, warm the heart by recollections of the past, by anticipations—hope's sunbeams—of the future, waiting, as it were, an earlier spring, rich in affection's flowers amid the snows of winter.

Christmas-day there are but few upon the human family to whom such associations are denied. Those whom death has isolated, left in the most blighted tree in the world's wilderness alone and unpitied.

Although Rachel could scarcely be silenced with three thought Lilian out, having still the love of her husband and Mary to console her, she was most as much to be pitied, for the warm was at her heart. Of all the old man equal his sufferings? he had given up his cottage on Blackheath in order to be near them. Country had become to him as a sea, and Mary—it would be difficult to describe the love of the eccentric clerk for the fair and gentle girl, who, as a child, had awakened so deep an interest in his heart.

The former friends of his employer either had contracted, or was about to contract, some alliance by the prevailing marriage, banished him; he could not discuss it from his mind; never, in the course of his long existence, had he felt so impatient for the arrival of the morrow, which was to confirm or dissipate his doubts.

Rachel and her husband merely smiled when he expressed them. Apart from the happiness of Mr. Bently, which was a matter of indifference to them, they were well-grounded or not, for could wealth increase Richard's happiness, they had more than enough already. As for Mary, she felt delighted with the idea of having a grandmamma.

Peter looked at his watch. It was past eight o'clock.

"Not yet arrived," he muttered; "most unlucious like habit; but there, Richard never was punctual. I dare to say, of late years. Things to surprise us, no doubt; *but he won't surprise us,*" added the old man, with a slight—a very slight—touch of bitterness in his tone. "Well, I have done all in my power to secure to the very letter; he will find nothing to reproach me with on that score, and I ready for the reception of the bride."

"Bride!" he repeated with a grimace; "that be should think of such a thing at his years! Why, he is only seventeen months and eleven days my junior. Perhaps it is catching," he added, with a desperate attempt to appear facetious; "if so, I shall be taking a wife soon."

"Oh, do—pray do!" exclaimed Mary, throwing her arms playfully round his neck; "I should so like to be a bride's-maid."

"I'll think of it, my love," answered Peter, drily.

Then, everyone by what struck him as a ridiculous idea at his time of life, he broke into a good-humored laugh.

"No, no," he added, parting the clustering curls from the brow of the fair girl, and inscribing a kiss upon her forehead, "I must dance at your wedding first."

The happy smile vanished from the countenance of his young favorite, and a pretty expression engulfed its place. Rachel was the only one who remarked the change; for Lilian escape a neighbor's eye.

A carriage was now heard to draw up at the door of the house, and Mr. Mangles began to feel nervously inquisitive.

"That is Richard, Mr. Mangles," he said.

"It is grandfather's carriage!" cried Mary, who, on hearing the vehicle, had run to one of the windows, and partially drawn aside the curtain to peep into the street.

"With four horses, no doubt," muttered the clerk, commencing a string of commentaries, audible only to himself. "Pomposity, with white favors; a giggling maid and impudent valet in the distance, marking the grateful footprints, during the brisk. What will they say in the city?"

Mr. Bently now made his appearance in the drawing-room.

Although neither George Hoffman nor his wife had paid much attention to the prediction of Peter, they were both struck by the change which had taken place in the appearance and general bearing of the merchant. He had quitted them a broken-spirited man, bowed down with regrets and sorrows. His figure was now erect, and his countenance were an expression of animated joy.

There was something more than mere affectionate in the feeling with which he embraced his daughter, and gazed upon her careworn features.

"You received my letter?" he said, after kissing his grandchild, and shaking hands with her father and the clerk.

"Three days since," answered Rachel, with a faint smile.

"Nine only came to hand at the same time," observed Peter, drily. "I trust you found everything attended to your satisfaction?"

"I have not been home yet," replied Mr. Bently. "This is my first visit."

"Good gracious!" mentally ejaculated Mangles, "he has never brought her here!"

"I am tired of the country, Rachel," said her father, "especially at this season of the year, when the home circle is something more than the circumscribedness of books and military thoughts."

"I never find time for military thoughts," observed the old clerk, in a tone which somewhat startled the merchant, "but I can understand that my man can complain of them, provided they are properly urged at the regularly intervals. A more than I can comprehend."

"Nor I either," said; they perfectly understood the books the speaker alluded to—in fact, the only ones that had ever greatly interested him.

"Mr. Mangles," said Rachel, with a smile, and hoist his head upon his hand for several minutes in an air of abstraction; evidently that was something upon his mind which he hesitated to disclose. Peter, fully alive to the nature of the supposition, enjoyed his embarrassment exceedingly.

"Now is it coming," he thought.

"Mr. Mangles," very earnest, Rachel," observed her father.

His daughter regarded him with a look of surprise.

"Have you forgotten the present I promised you in my letter?"

"Pretty present—a mother-in-law," mumbled the clerk. "Half Mary's fortune gone, at the very least. Well?"

"Have my gifts become valueless?" added the merchant.

"Valueless?" repeated Rachel; "oh, no. You know how fondly I prize the slightest mark of your affection; blessed with that, I have nothing more to wish for."

"You must be happy—much happier that fails to the lot of most of us," observed Mr. Bently with a sigh; "*how* in this world can pronounce that Heaven has not denied you a single blessing. What, *not one desire? not one?*"

Rachel hesitated, reclaimed the agitated woman, her eyes instantly filling with tears, "you do not, I am sure you do not, mean those words sinfully, but they will pain me. Could I wish for more? Forgive, in sleeping regrets, its agonies, you would have me forget? Oh, my father, forget it not! If my sometimes wear a smile, it is that I may not cloud the joy that others feel. Do not—do not say" my life has been one of sorrow; repress and pain."

Mary ran to the side of her mother, and, throwing her arms round her, vainly endeavored to fall feet. The soul upon the fountain had been broken.

Mr. Bently, however, in a moment very red in the face, used his handkerchief several times, and resolutely kept his countenance averted.

"He has the heart of a crocodile," he mentally ejaculated.

"Mr. Bently, is this wise? Is it kind?"

"Silence, George," said the merchant, interrupting his son-in-law. "We sometimes live to regret ourselves, but never our benefactors."

There was something so impressive, not in the words merely, but in the tone and dignified manner of the speaker, that the former was involuntarily compelled with. Not another remonstrance was offered to Rachel.

"Rachel," continued her father, in a voice which was perfectly calm, though it trembled in its well with secure use of intentional unkindness. You are a mother, and I feel that you will not refuse to the fate of a parent's love. It was far from my design to inflict an unnecessary pang. Would I could recall the past! but I cannot."

The features of his daughter suddenly became pallid as death, and against which the speaker leaned.

"God in very merciful, Rachel," he added. "The blessing we too frequently demand with impatience is often withheld in love. It is wisely withheld to be accorded in our resignation."

A piercing cry—it could not be called of joy, much of happy sorrow—burst from the lips of Mary, which terrified with tenderness. You are too good—too generous," she added, with increasing excitement, "to torture me with delusive hopes. He lives! say that he lives! a look—a word. I can bear it, indeed I can. Oh, my mother, my dear mother! Speak, or supreme will kill me. Richard, my son, my son!"

On hearing his name this passionately pronounced, prostrate on the floor of prostrate himself too suddenly—all gave way in the strong impulse of filial love, and our hero entered the drawing-room without waiting for the signal agreed upon between his grandfather and himself.

"Mother, dear mother!" were the only words his agitation permitted him to speak; but there was a spell in them that awoke the long silent echoes in that mother's heart. In an instant her arms were

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around his neck; her heart beating against his; her pale lips pressed to the cheek of her lost son.

Kisses, tokens unknown of gratitude, and looks that spoke unutterable affection, were all that passed between them. In that embrace how richly did Richard Hoffman feel all he had endured repaid. To the long desolate mother's heart—for what pen can describe her emotions, as the guard left her alone with her son—how fondly her memory had been cherished!

For some time neither the father nor the sister ventured to disturb the mother and son. At length a night boiler even than them—the claim of maternal love.

Rachel did not forget them.

"George," she added, extending her hand to her husband, "our boy—our eldest-born restored from from shame and crime! Mary, your brother!"

The arm of Richard encircled the form of the weeping girl, whose head reclined upon his shoulder.

"Thanks, Lord!" added the grateful woman, falling upon her knees; "the children that Thou gavest have not been turned from Thee!"

"My son," exclaimed his deeply-agitated father, as he grasped his hand, "I can meet your gaze without a blush: sorrow and an angel's gentleness have redeemed me from the darkness of sin."

"I know all," replied the young man: "your struggles, struggles. Know how grateful I ought to feel to call you father!"

"Come with me to the library, George," said Mr. Brent; "there is still much to be explained. Richard will undertake the task to his mother. Bring Mary with you."

Leading the daughter by the arm, George Hoffman quitted the room, accompanied by Peter Mangles, who kept blundering like a child. The merchant followed last: as he closed the door of the drawing-room after him, he felt, for the first time for years, rewarded with liberty!

"And I," said the old clerk, when his employer had concluded the narrative of his early career with his grandson and all that had resulted from it—"I, too, have secured you at least of feeling."

"Hush!" interrupted Mr. Brently, "no reproaches. The best I can say of my conduct is that Providence has made even the worst subservient."

"But I will reproach myself," exclaimed Peter, "I have a right to do so; you know I am not what a riduculous old fool I have been. Would you believe it, Richard, when I received your letter in which you spoke of being no longer alone in the world, I took it into my stupid head that you were married! As if my own, forsooth, he added, "would do such an unbusiness-like thing as our family of late."

"I was greatly excited when I wrote it," observed the merchant, "for I knew my grandson had just been restored to me; it might have been worded more cautiously."

"But that is not all," resumed Mr. Mangles, who appeared resolved to make a clean breast of it. "Just now, not an hour since, I compared you to a crocodile—to be sure it was to myself—a crocodile!" he added, with a sigh, "not that I ever saw one."

Here the speaker looked as if he conferred that not very important fact only increased the atrocity of his conduct.

"I know you will forgive me," he continued, "and that is where I feel it; if I thought you would not, I should not be half so miserable."

"I have nothing to forgive, old friend," replied Mr. Brently, with a smile; "we have jogged on through life too long together, not to bear with each other's failings."

"There is some truth in that, Richard," observed Peter, with what, to those who did not know the simplicity of his character, might have appeared a fit touch of humor. "If we must all of us take the good with the evil, and strike a balance, I suppose."

The merchant and his son-in-law both agreed that there was more wisdom in his words than the speaker dreamt of; both felt that all things had worked together for the best.

On returning to the drawing-room, they found Rachel and her son more composed, the violence of their first emotions had subsided, and a calm, if deep contentment, such as the heart feels when its best affections are gratified, supplied their place.

At Mr. Brently, he felt both touched and gratified by the affectionate manner in which his daughter met him—there was no coldness in her deep, thoughtful eyes for more expressive than her words, as she thanked and blessed him for the part he had taken of his grandson.

As for Frank Mayfield, he could not take his eyes from our hero, but sat devouring him with his looks. To such a state of excitement had the old man worked himself, that several times he felt obliged to leave everyone to the headkerchief to hide the emotion which oppressed him.

"You must love our kind old friend," whispered Mary to her brother; "you must, or he will be dull of gratitude we owe him."

"You are wrong there," replied Richard; "I have heard it all."

"From grandfather?" inquired the artless girl.

"Partly from him, and partly from another."

"Another?" repeated her astonished sister, "who could it be?"

The reply which, like the observation that first led to it, was given in an under tone, brought the rich blush to the cheek of Mary; and yet it conferred but of sorrow, of which sounded very like Henry.

Time flew swiftly when happiness forgets to count its moments; and the Christmas snow—the day when angel lips first uttered peace on earth and good will to men—had dawned before Mr. Brently quitted the house of his son-in-law.

"*This is your home now, Richard,*" he observed, when he made his grandson good night. "Not a step," he added, as the youth was about to proffer to see him at least to his carriage. "My home will not appear desolate now, as the happy hours I have left behind me will people it with joyous recollections."

"Tomorrow, then," said our hero, with a smile.

"We shall meet again with calmer feelings," replied the merchant. "Rachel," he added, as his daughter advanced to receive his fond embrace, "you will not fail me—I am sure you will not, for I have not forgotten your words—A mother's heart is strong." You will encourage strange fancy, but kind hearts—those who have loved your own."

Perhaps there were fewer happier persons that night than Mr. Brently. There was not one fear over that the firm would become extinct. George Hoffman and his son would bring fresh energy and youth to it. Everything had turned out as he could have wished; and he foresaw the time when he and his employer might leave the direction of affairs in younger hands. They had lolled long enough.

"I hope they have attended to the boy's bookkeeping," he muttered to himself. "Surely, Richard has never neglected that."

"Even if he has," he thought, "a year or two under my care, well—you—you—that may be made all smooth."

In bed the old clerk had rather wished that his grandfather might have neglected our hero's education so that important point, so delightful that he feel would be the task of instructing him.

It was not extraordinary that, after the violent emotions he had endured, the sleep of Rachel Hoffman proved a restless one; that more than once she started from her pillow and asked herself if the happiness she felt was real, or whether imagination had not once more cheated her by one of those intensely vivid dreams which mock the sleep of sorrow.

So painful did this uncertainty at last become that she crept softly from her room and, hastily drawing a wrapper around her, proceeded to the room where Richard slept in order to confirm or dissipate the doubt engendered by maternal love.

As her hand rested on the door of the chamber, she heard the object of her solicitude murmur her name in his slumber.

It was sufficient; her heart recognised his voice, and she knelt for an instant to pray and bless him.

In that position her husband, who had missed her from his side, discovered her, and would have tenderly reproached her for thus risking her health, had she not checked the words by placing a finger upon her lips.

"There!" she whispered, pointing to the room, "there I sleeping wounds our rest; all that is precious to me—to you—is now restored to us—son and heaven, George, honest; have we not? can we be grateful?"

"We have, indeed," replied the father of our hero; "for surely I was the unthinking of my fellow men; a better heritage than the fruits of industry may secure him; but this is not the hour, Rachel."

"I know it, George," interrupted his wife; "I do not blame you; I only feel as children do when they happiness seems too great to be real. I doubt, I fear, I tremble, and I must look at my son—looking in his face with a smile.

"Angel!" exclaimed her husband, with emotion, "so readily might the wrecked mariner feel angel at the mast, which bore him through the fearful surge to the haven he dreaded never to see; and so his guide amid the pitiless desert's sands, as I with thee."

Our hero and his sister were the first to meet in the breakfast-room on the following morning.

"Richard, dear Richard!" exclaimed the gentle girl, as she threw her arms around his neck, "I cannot tell you how happy you have made us, how constantly your name has been remembered and prayed for. It was not home without you."

"And I never despaired of your return."

"You believed in the promise of my friend Harry, then?" replied her brother, archly. "Poor fellow! the happiness of my dearest friend is his special position. I had bound him by a promise."

"Which he kept, I hope," observed our hero.

"To the risk of his happiness," observed our brother.

"How can you suppose such a thing; said Mary, blushing at the same time deeply; "why I don't even know if I love—"

"Is not Harry a very pretty name?"

"I suppose it is not to any one."

"Mortion, the son of an honorable man, one of our grandfather's oldest friends. He is a handsome fellow, companion, friend. You must love him," he added, "for my sake."

His sister looked up to the man whom not to love a very different one might have been, with an exclamation.

"You must tell me about Lillian," she said, anxious to change the subject. "Grandpapa missed her last night, and I feel so anxious to see her. I feel certain that I shall love her already, as she will be good as well as beautiful to have won your affections."

"Why so?" demanded Richard, with a smile.

"Because you are good and—and—I have found out my theory, I might make you vain," answered Mary. "You are waiting left to wish for one thing to be restored to us," she continued, gazing fondly in his face. "I feel so proud of you. I used to envy my young companions who had brothers, and now I confess to, to look up to, to protect them, and felt so desolate. But that is past," she added, looking through the tears the recollection caused her. I shall never experience that feeling more."

"Why so?" demanded Richard, with a smile.

"Because you are good and—and—I have found out my theory, I might make you vain," answered Mary. "You are waiting left to wish for one thing to be restored to us," she continued, gazing fondly in his face. "I feel so proud of you. I used to envy my young companions who had brothers, and now I confess to, to look up to, to protect them, and felt so desolate. But that is past," she added, looking through the tears the recollection caused her. I shall never experience that feeling more."

"I have a vast deal of love to pay you," observed her brother, playfully, "and you must receive it with interest."

From that hour there were no secrets between them; each poured into the other's heart the confidence which their long separation in life had endeared.

It was a gratifying sight to Rachel and her husband on entering the breakfast-room, to find their children thus united.

During the morning Jack Manders made his appearance in the room, and was received by our hero most affectionately, received by the parents of his benefactor and friend, who had been aware of his conduct to Lillian, his grateful fidelity to himself, and, in the absence of his master, to the lad possessed in the path of integrity and truth.

At first the poor fellow felt embarrassed; he had not seen the family since the day when he had generously defended her from the brutal violence of Carus Brent—since the night he had rescued her only at one poor and humble as himself, and was overcome by the unexpected reception and the elegance and comforts that wealth bestows.

But Rachel had not forgotten the poor lad, had no place in her grateful heart, and she thanked him warmly for the past.

"This is your home if I am not aware of," observed her son. "Ah, Jack, you have secrets I find from Lillian."

"Pray do not allude to it, sir," replied the young man, more embarrassed at being praised than he had been by reproaches.

"Why, Jack, you are here; I'll tell you *Jack*."

"Mr. Richard—Richard, then," said his too humble friend, deeply gratified. "I knew that you were honored and respected by your friends, and I wanted to witness it with my own eyes, and as the lieutenant, Mr. Mortion, was going to leave me I might venture, I thought—"

"You would see your grandfather's friends," interrupted Richard, with a smile, "and you have done right. Now, Jack, you must come and see us often, and bring your mother with you."

"Mother, sir!" exclaimed the lad, with surprise, "why, she is dead, and has been so these many years."

"Dead!" repeated Richard, in astonishment, "why, I have been told that she was living."

"Who could have told you that, sir?" said Jack, blushing at the same time deeply; "why I don't even know where she is."

"Jack, you must find her out," said Richard, "I have a right to do so; you have done what a ridiculous old fool I have been. Would you believe it, Richard, when I received your letter in which you spoke of being no longer alone in the world, I took it into my stupid head that you were married! As if my own, forsooth, he added, "would do such an unbusiness-like thing as our family of late."

"I was greatly excited when I wrote it," observed the merchant, "for I knew my grandson had just been restored to me; it might have been worded more cautiously."

"But that is not all," resumed Mr. Mangles, who appeared resolved to make a clean breast of it. "Just now, not an hour since, I compared you to a crocodile—to be sure it was to myself—a crocodile!" he added, with a sigh, "not that I ever saw one."

Here the speaker looked as if he conferred that not very important fact only increased the atrocity of his conduct.

"I know you will forgive me," he continued, "and that is where I feel it; if I thought you would not, I should not be half so miserable."

"I have nothing to forgive, old friend," replied Mr. Brently, with a smile; "we have jogged on through life too long together, not to bear with each other's failings."

"There is some truth in that, Richard," observed Peter, with what, to those who did not know the simplicity of his character, might have appeared a fit touch of humor. "If we must all of us take the good with the evil, and strike a balance, I suppose."

The merchant and his son-in-law both agreed that there was more wisdom in his words than the speaker dreamt of; both felt that all things had worked together for the best.

On returning to the drawing-room, they found Rachel and her son more composed, the violence of their first emotions had subsided, and a calm, if deep contentment, such as the heart feels when its best affections are gratified, supplied their place.

At Mr. Brently, he felt both touched and gratified by the affectionate manner in which his daughter met him—there was no coldness in her deep, thoughtful eyes for more expressive than her words, as she thanked and blessed him for the part he had taken of his grandson.

As for Frank Mayfield, he could not take his eyes from our hero, but sat devouring him with his looks. To such a state of excitement had the old man worked himself, that several times he felt obliged to leave everyone to the headkerchief to hide the emotion which oppressed him.

"You must love our kind old friend," whispered Mary to her brother; "you must, or he will be dull of gratitude we owe him."

"You are wrong there," replied Richard; "I have heard it all."

"From grandfather?" inquired the artless girl.

"Partly from him, and partly from another."

"Another?" repeated her astonished sister, "who could it be?"

The reply which, like the observation that first led to it, was given in an under tone, brought the rich blush to the cheek of Mary; and yet it conferred but of sorrow, of which sounded very like Henry.

Time flew swiftly when happiness forgets to count its moments; and the Christmas snow—the day when angel lips first uttered peace on earth and good will to men—had dawned before Mr. Brently quitted the house of his son-in-law.

"*This is your home now, Richard,*" he observed, when he made his grandson good night. "Not a step," he added, as the youth was about to proffer to see him at least to his carriage. "My home will not appear desolate now, as the happy hours I have left behind me will people it with joyous recollections."

"Tomorrow, then," said our hero, with a smile.

"We shall meet again with calmer feelings," replied the merchant. "Rachel," he added, as his daughter advanced to receive his fond embrace, "you will not fail me—I am sure you will not, for I have not forgotten your words—A mother's heart is strong." You will encourage strange fancy, but kind hearts—those who have loved your own."

Perhaps there were fewer happier persons that night than Mr. Brently. There was not one fear over that the firm would become extinct. George Hoffman and his son would bring fresh energy and youth to it. Everything had turned out as he could have wished; and he foresaw the time when he and his employer might leave the direction of affairs in younger hands. They had lolled long enough.

"I hope they have attended to the boy's bookkeeping," he muttered to himself. "Surely, Richard has never neglected that."

"Even if he has," he thought, "a year or two under my care, well—you—you—that may be made all smooth."

In bed the old clerk had rather wished that his grandfather might have neglected our hero's education so that important point, so delightful that he feel would be the task of instructing him.

It was not extraordinary that, after the violent emotions he had endured, the sleep of Rachel Hoffman proved a restless one; that more than once she started from her pillow and asked herself if the happiness she felt was real, or whether imagination had not once more cheated her by one of those intensely vivid dreams which mock the sleep of sorrow.

So painful did this uncertainty at last become that she crept softly from her room and, hastily drawing a wrapper around her, proceeded to the room where Richard slept in order to confirm or dissipate the doubt engendered by maternal love.

As her hand rested on the door of the chamber, she heard the object of her solicitude murmur her name in his slumber.

It was sufficient; her heart recognised his voice, and she knelt for an instant to pray and bless him.

In that position her husband, who had missed her from his side, discovered her, and would have tenderly reproached her for thus risking her health, had she not checked the words by placing a finger upon her lips.

"There!" she whispered, pointing to the room, "there I sleeping wounds our rest; all that is precious to me—to you—is now restored to us—son and heaven, George, honest; have we not? can we be grateful?"

"We have, indeed," replied the father of our hero; "for surely I was the unthinking of my fellow men; a better heritage than the fruits of industry may secure him; but this is not the hour, Rachel."

"I know it, George," interrupted his wife; "I do not blame you; I only feel as children do when they happiness seems too great to be real. I doubt, I fear, I tremble, and I must look at my son—looking in his face with a smile.

"Angel!" exclaimed her husband, with emotion, "so readily might the wrecked mariner feel angel at the mast, which bore him through the fearful surge to the haven he dreaded never to see; and so his guide amid the pitiless desert's sands, as I with thee."

Our hero and his sister were the first to meet in the breakfast-room on the following morning.

"Richard, dear Richard!" exclaimed the gentle girl, as she threw her arms around his neck, "I cannot tell you how happy you have made us, how constantly your name has been remembered and prayed for. It was not home without you."

"And I never despaired of your return."

"You believed in the promise of my friend Harry, then?" replied her brother, archly. "Poor fellow! the happiness of my dearest friend is his special position. I had bound him by a promise."

"Which he kept, I hope," observed our hero.

"To the risk of his happiness," observed our brother.

"How can you suppose such a thing; said Mary, blushing at the same time deeply; "why I don't even know if I love—"

"Is not Harry a very pretty name?"

"I suppose it is not to any one."

"Mortion, the son of an honorable man, one of our grandfather's oldest friends. He is a handsome fellow, companion, friend. You must love him," he added, "for my sake."

His sister looked up to the man whom not to love a very different one might have been, with an exclamation.

"You must tell me about Lillian," she said, anxious to change the subject. "Grandpapa missed her last night, and I feel so anxious to see her. I feel certain that I shall love her already, as she will be good as well as beautiful to have won your affections

THE CAVERN IN THE SEA.

BY WILLIE K. PARDE.

I have read, somewhere in story, of a strange, mysterious cave,
Hidden in the realm of waters, in the deep bed of the ocean wave;
And the brave one and the daring who would brave its mystery
Can only find an entrance, through the potency of the sea.

But, once in the magic chamber—once within the rocky wall,
With the light that from the waters of the cavern flashed from the ball—

In the chilness like enchantment, like a dream of cool Calypso,
One can make away the moments under Fancy's potent sway.

All the visions that float outward through the bottom of misty sea,
All the fairies in the fortunes that beleive the ripples can convey—

All the glories of ambition—all the mirage of renown,
That believe the rising splendor that the heart and spirit crown;

And flowing and forever, floating on Enchantment's tide,
The brave one and the daring, in Hyperion fable abide.

This is what Tradition tells us. Let a full trust rosy lips,
As before the sacred Delphian oracle, when the time for telling spoke.

Like beads from broken coronets, like pearls from parted bands,
Or the green plants and the palm-trees, in the sunlight of the land.

And in those like these, the legend of the years so far away,
Finds this office in the service of the dreams of to-day —

In the development of the modern hidden love or strange agony,
As ever reminiscence drew forward beneath the troubled years;

Like the chant that and unconscious over the alchemist's book,
By thousands go by thinking, thus knowing, what the time spoke.

To collect the central treasure in the cave of woman's love,
That lies within the heart of every Fisher who will dive upon occasion.

He must daring be who ventures; if he wins, a victor he
Mightier than all the victors on the page of History.

Through the billows of uncertainty he must pass to secure true joy,
For within the hidden cavern he can find no common toy.

But, once in the magic precincts—all his trials born a crime,
And his heart hidden in the waters of a sure and sweet reprose;

And forever and forever, floating on Affection's tide,
The brave one and the loving, in Hyperion fable abide.

JENNY JENKINS.

BY ANNA CORA, JR.

"No!" said Isadore Bolton, with an imperious stamp of the foot, "I shall not consent to attend upon the evening; nor do I wish you to show yourself at all when I have company. You are becoming too familiar for one in your place. You will keep your room until I call for you."

Jenny Jenkins turned to the window to hide the hot tears that would struggle to her eyes. She then sneered at an office for weeping that she used every exertion within her power on the present occasion to keep back the flood.

"You need not pretend that you are very much hurt by what I have said," continued Isadore, as she saw her maid trouble. "Person in your situation need not be easily offended. Mercy on me! Things are coming to a pretty pass if our very servants have got to be treated as though they were honored guests."

"Miss Miss Bolton," cried Jenny, brushing away her tears, and facing her mistress. "I have no wish to doubt, you know very well, I know I am poor and friendless, and that but for your kindness I might be now without a home; but I hope you will not add to my misfortune by ill-treating me."

"Ill-treating, indeed!" retorted Isadore with a flashing eye. "You are a pretty one, now, you'll suppose you think that John Lapham loves you. I have no doubt that you imagine he is—poor fool you to others when he had tried to win."

"I have thought nothing," returned Jenny, struggling still all her power.

"And you had better continue to think nothing," resumed Isadore. "John Lapham did soon have the audacity to make advances of a particular kind to me. His wife was relieved from needed repairing, and he hoped to gain mine; but when I discovered this he was without dignified and a liberties, I turned from him as I would have turned from a serpent."

"A needlefull and liberties!" repeated Jenny, turning deadly pale.

"Aye—did you not know it? I thought it had become notorious. But my—I hope he has not been working upon your poor foolish heart. When he sought me it was for my money; but if he seeks you, it must be—other info ones."

"Stop!" groaned Jenny. "Oh! do not say anything more."

With a look of malignant satisfaction upon the injured girl, Isadore hurried from the room, and Jenny was left alone. She threw herself upon the couch, and there she lay and wept for a long time, where she lay until she heard the sound of the sound of music came up from the large parlors, where a brilliant party were assembling. Later in the evening she walked out into the garden to get a breath of fresh air. The moon was up, and a gentle breeze, laden with the sweet fragrance of a thousand varied flowers and shrubs, came sweeping softly over the scene. She sat down upon one of the mossy couches, and are she had been there many minutes she became pronounced. She looked up, and beheld John Lapham.

"Jenny," he said, in a serious tone, "I have been searching for you."

She looked up into his handsome face—she gazed upon his manly form, and then simply but coolly sitter—and her heart throbbed painfully.

"Mr. Lapham," she replied, speak—I as calmly as she could, "why should you seek me? You move in a circle far above the station I occupy, and your associations are far removed from mine. Let our acquaintance cease here; it may be better for both of us."

"At least," returned the young man, taking a seat by Jenny's side, "we will understand each other before we part." He hesitated a few moments, and then he resumed—

"If she could be the last time we meet, let us at least part understandingly. I sought you this evening for the purpose of telling you everything clear. I am orphan, as you well know, and am alone in the world. My parents left me with some money, and I went into business. In worldly matters I prospered, but I had no home. I wanted a companion—some one to love, and to love me. I saw Isadore Bolton. She was called beautiful and witty. She threw herself in my way, and gave me the most flattering attention; but when I came to read her character I feared to trust my happiness with her. She is— But never mind. I could not love her as I would love the most perfect one human can have. I saw you—I saw your you in as humble position—but it was the person and not the position I sought. You put me in mind of my mother when you moved before me, and when you spoke and smiled you seemed like the door sister I had had. So I learned to love you, and I fondly believed that you would be to me all that the most ardent soul could desire. I know you were an orphan; but I knew nothing of your history beyond that, nor—do I know now."

He spoke hesitatingly as he closed, and seemed to be troubled. Jenny was deeply affected. She opened into a warm friendship. The force of two men were congenial, and she had many like so many qualities in common. The first act of Lapham's which led drawn Jenny Jenkins to the garden was intended to take a step of wise.

"Don't you ever use it?" asked Georgo.

"Never," was the reply of the young servant. "I promised my mother, upon my death bed, that I would not, and I never apply it."

Arlington extended his hand and with a warm, friendly grasp he responded—

"I thank you there. I made the same promise to my God when I was a boy, and I have kept it to this day."

And from that hour their friendship was sealed. They were true friends, and when two years together one day," they felt not that you are making love to a little fairy who lives with Mr. Bolton. How is it?"

"Are you poking fun at me?" asked Lapham.

"No, upon my soul I am not. And I'll tell you why. They tell me she is a mere servant girl, and a penniless orphan to boot. Now I know you well enough to know that no power on earth could induce you to make such a connection, so if you really seek her hand you do it from love, and from love alone. Is that the case?"

"Thank you, George," replies the other, warmly. "I do love his poor orphan, and I mean to make her my wife, and though I may not get so much a prize as some of my fellows, I am content. I shall be satisfied."

"Are you joking fun at me?" asked Lapham.

"No, upon my soul I am not. And I'll tell you why. They tell me she is a mere servant girl, and a penniless orphan to boot. Now I know you well enough to know that no power on earth could induce you to make such a connection, so if you really seek her hand you do it from love, and from love alone. Is that the case?"

"Yes, sir," replied. She gazed up into his face as he spoke, and she knew she might trust him. She was urged on by a power she could not control, and, without a thought of concealment, she told her simple story.

"I am an orphan," she said, with her head bowed, "and misfortune marked me for its own from my birth. My mother died when I was a mere child, and I was barely remember her—and I was left to a life in those early years were thunderah. My father was a drunkard—a poor, depraved drunkard—and I suffered all the shame a drunkard's child must suffer. He beat me, and made me beg for him, and yet I tried to love him. Finally, one night, he came home in his usual state, and in one of his drunken spells, and was cast into prison. He clung to him; but he died in that terrible dungeon, and I had no friend or home. When I told people my name they called me a drunkard's child, and I was away from the town, and was afraid to tell my name. A poor woman gave me shelter, and also gave me her name. I lived with her two years, and then she died, and Mrs. Bolton took me.

"And your name is not Jenkins?" whispered the young man, eagerly.

"No, sir. That was the name of the woman who first took me. My name is the same as yours."

"Thank God—I know it. You lived in Mayfield?"

"Yes, sir."

"And don't you remember your brother?"

"I had a brother, but he died when I was a little was buried, and I never saw him again."

"Did you tell he ran away?"

"Our father beat him because he cried for his dead mother. He then ran away; and he said he would come back some day and kill him."

"Aye—that brother was to see—he went to Texas—he became wealthy—and he has come back to Boston to look for his dear sister!"

Jenny had felt it—she had felt it in her soul that it was her brother; and when the words were shout her, she laid her head upon his bosom, and wept for joy. And great indeed was that meeting.

At this juncture the door was opened, and Isadore Bolton entered. She had been spying upon the strange scene before her, and then tried to play hypocrite; but her passion was too potent for that, and she burst forth in a torrent of bitterness.

"Stop, sir," spoke Mr. Arlington, rising to his feet. "You do wrong to us both. When I am your guest I will be detained here I was on my way to a distant town to seek for a long-lost sister. But I have found her. Hold! not a word more. This fair girl's parents were my parents, and his explanation suffer for the present."

Isadore Bolton gradually recovered from the shock she had received, and then she became engrave Jenny. The only two wealthy lovers she had ever trapped had been both snatched away from her—one to be Jenny's husband, and the other to be Jenny's brother—and she was left in fate and poverty until she gradually succeeded in springing her matrimonial trap successfully upon a bold-looked old man who had plenty of money, and who had not and plenty of temper; but who yet had such a soft spot in his heart because never lived to be a wife, so she had at one time fondly anticipated.

As for Jenny, her days were happy ones, and beneath the kind smiles of her husband and her brother she created social and domestic sunshine enough to lighten the lone-path of the whole neighborhood in which she lived.

DID YOU EVER?

Did ever you go into the presence of one whose every look, every word, every action spoke of gracefn—of one whose features you had never seen contorted by a frown, or cold with indifference, when turned towards you, only to meet an answer of clouds and gloom? If so, how did it make you feel? Did you not almost unconsciously say to yourself, Oh, that I could be like that! Did you not make such gloom as the veil that an angry or a changed heaven hung before the face of one you loved, and who you knew loved you, and who you love you. Anything, anything of earthly anguish that could never borne than the loss of the love and friendship of one you love and thoroughly believe in. And when you have known and felt that your friend was changed—that his eye, indeed, beamed coldly, and with the kind approval of old, he or no one, and when you have found that your great and dreadful fear was groundless—that he was not changed, were not unhappy—almost all you had seen into Heaven, and heard the dwellers there singing your name as one that was dear to them, in the Book of Life?

Friendship and love: one love—unchanging and kind like that of Heaven—what would this world be were these to forsake it and not return?

SCENES OF OUR BOYHOOD.

What must have been the feelings of Napoleon when, after a battle with the Allies in 1814, he found himself under the very tree at Brienne, where he had read "Jerusalem Delivered" in his youth. He would no doubt have exchanged all grandeur of his subsequent elevation to recall those days again. How delighted was Washington to find himself, after the close of existence, the same yellow-tree at Litchfield which he had known in his boyhood. Waller, in his old age, bought a small house in which he had at Cobenhill, that he might return again to the place of his early recollections, and "die like a dog where he had been reared." How many similar instances might be quoted of attachment to the place of youth. Reverert to them in the last period of existence, as if we would like run our course of years over again, and yet this is really the case with very few of us —we love them, perhaps, because the innocence and calmness of youth give us more satisfaction, upon reflection, than the artifice and selfishness of intervening years.

THE SAILOR'S FALL.

AN ADVENTURE AT NARRAGANSETT.

BY AN OLD "SALT."

Few Americans have visited Valparaiso who have not heard of a remarkable fall, from one of the highest of that town, made some years ago by one of our sailors. I had myself, at a different time, by several of my friends, and afterwards accidentally learned the circumstances from an eye-witness, who, at so happened, was shipmate and whose companion of the unfortunate sailor, the hero of the story. His account of the adventure was given in substance as follows:

After our ship had lain some time at anchor in the harbor of Valparaiso, I got leave to go ashore one day with some of my shipmates, and we landed in the boat, with the prospect of a pleasant time. We had agreed to ramble about the town, and take a walk into the country beyond it, as we had made accordingly to proceed as straight a place as it appeared to be. There is a line of storehouses near the water, but the main part of the buildings of the town lie in several rattan between the hills, which the very deep. Most of these, while a few private residences of wealthy merchants and others are scattered. The ground presents a very irregular and broken appearance from whatever side it is seen, and the view from the steeple of the principal city, or the ridge of the Andes is distinctly in sight far behind, extending to the north and south for many miles. The beach, and rising, like an unbroken wall, up to the hills.

We passed up one of the ravines by a street which is called by sailors the Shambles, and which is called by sailors the Maintop, and walked about for several hours, looking out upon the Pacific occasionally, and admiring the beautiful, unusually destitute of habitations, cultivation and trees, sometimes admiring the luminous of the distant mountains, and sometimes wondering why the country was not settled, and why a piece of ground for their town, where they had been obliged to build their houses and pile their stores in the most inconvenient places possible. Before we turned again towards the shore, my companions complained of the long hilocky, and suggested that a little shop to drink shoke. One of them, seeing a house with a sign over the door, which looked like a liquor, by a somewhat irregular gait. We followed him, and nothing remarkable occurred beyond the common appearance of sailor lollity, until we came to the very small end of the street, situated in going up as very remarkable. It was one of those places where the ground was uneven, and there it was quite perpendicular, while nothing was to be seen like a wall or fence to prevent a person from falling over. It has been several years of the poor houses, or rather hovels, of the poorer class of Spaniards, and was built of mud bricks, and covered with a loose thatch. I should be afraid to give an opinion of the height of the place from, but it should seem incredible. I will only say that it appeared to me that it would be nothing to descend without great caution.

We had passed this place unheeding, until we unshipped, what was become of Jack?" Then, looking about, I discovered that our jolliest companion was missing. I need not say that we ceased to give a few particulars necessary to be known, and commenced a search for him, which had become of him.

Among the houses standing at the foot of the hill was one of the poorest, perhaps, in Valparaiso. It was occupied by a family of Indians, or Spaniards, which was supported, I believe, by a few fruit-trees, or other branches of trade. The inhabitants were the family of a poor laborer, who had died a few days before, and was buried that afternoon. They were then in the midst of the with an enormous dish placed before them, containing, I believe, a mixture of rice and fish of stew or broth, eaten every day by all the lower classes of people. As the mourners had been ready to begin, a strange sound was heard over their heads, and the roof of the house or building was violently shaken, and instantly burst through. The first impression was that an earthquake, for the belief in evil spirits is universal among that people, and they would have risen from their seats and fled from the house; if they had done so, the stranger, especially as the roof seemed likely to fall in upon them. But in a moment a large body fell through the opening in the thatch, and quickly as he could see in the dark, a tremendous shock, into the great dish of broth, which was overturned, and spread in all directions. Instead of the fire, rising their faces and hands wherever it touched them.

This was no shoe-party. On missing our companion, we had concluded that he must have fallen down the hill, and immediately set down as fast as we could. There we arrived in time to witness the whole affair. The family were in the street, with the appearance of people almost mad with fright, their hands lifted up to inquire what was the matter, and, to cross all, Jack, holding out of the hat, half-filled with the broth, which he emptied with the hot broth, making strange gesticulations and exclamations, and in short, looking like a stranger belonged to

AUTUMN SONG.

BY E. D. STUART.

The sun is more over the plain,
Over the hill;
Happy birds rejoice again,
Merrily;
Up the sky at morning sing,
Dancing from the earth they spring,
Glad and free;
Rise are leaving leaving the hills,
Flocks are leaving the hills,
Joy from earth and air distils,
Joyously.

Speeds the farmer with his wain,
Gathering the ripened grain;

Trees their golden trysings deem;
As I too forest shakes its crown,
Happy children hunting nuts,
Shouts with ripened cheek respond,
Full of glee;
So the Autumn days go by,
Where, joy and beauty wake,
Blessings on its sunsle head!
Let it be.

Man has gathered in his store,
Let the Winter wind not roar,
Pull the reft, and fall the tree,
Night wind not moan;
No, not so!

LOST UPON THE PRAIRIES.

AN ADVENTURE IN WESTERN TEXAS.

We had had a day of exciting sport, as was evident by the sluggy robes that lay in a pile upon the ground, awaiting the evening process at the reserve, and the famous of red meat, hanging from limb to limb of the grand forest.

With quickened pulses, and appetites sharpened by the healthful exercise and the keen breeze of the plains, we had gathered, a cheerful group, around our camp-fire. In front of the glowing embers large, juicy slices of young buffalo-meat were roasting, and filling the cool, evening air with a tempting cooking fragrance.

We were a wide-awake little party, who, the day before, had established our camp in a beautiful grove of oaks in the midst of the buffalo range, which extends from the upper Brazos to the head waters of the Nueces, and westward to the banks of the Rio Bravo.

Our supports were soon disposed of, and each man having filled his clay pipe, passed himself in the most comfortable position to be a comfortable enjoyment of the fragrant weed.

We had in our company a number of old Texians. These men, whose experiences were many and exciting, were always ready to entertain the circle around the camp-fire by the recital of them; and Ben Walker, an old, grizzled veteran, was called upon for a story.

"Very well, boys," was his prompt reply, "I have no objection to spin a short yarn, if it will be any satisfaction; and if I can't amuse you, perhaps I can take some of you to sleep."

"As I have been laying here, looking out upon the extensive scene, with feelings of awe and reverence which I," continued the old hunter, "I could not help calling to mind the time, many years ago, when I was lost out here, upon this same prairie, and a little more to the westward."

"You must know," he went on, "that I first came to this country in '31; a time when no white man had settled anywhere, west of old Fort Jesup, in Louisiana. My mother and only sister having suddenly died, and the old homestead seems at home becoming obscure in my father, he sold the place, and accompanied by myself and a few of the old family negroes started a small plantation on the Sabine, near Gaines' ferry on the old San Antonio trail. But after Col. Austin established his colony on San Felipe, on the Brazos, we pulled up stakes and for the sake of American neighborhood, settled on that stream. It was while journeying from the Sabine to our new home that I first beheld one of those glorious expanses of waving verdure, over which I had often longed to wander, in my youth."

"Between the Sabine and the Trinity, we had traveled over rolling prairies of small extent, frequently interspersed with timber islands, and adorned with thick groves of oaks and sweet gum. But it was not till we had passed the Trinity bottom, and entered the tangled forest which springs from its prolific borders, and extends for miles westward, that we struck the extensive prairies of Middle Texas. Here, for the first time, I beheld the wild cattle in nothing but green, extended plain, and like lake, stainless sky, stretched for days in a rank through the grassy waves of that verdant sea, emerging at night in the fickle banks of live oaks, where we were always sure of finding a good, spring, or standing water."

"But when I afterwards heard, from our Mexican neighbors, of those still wider plains, where, for days and days, one could ride, travel, out of sight of land, as it were, I determined to join some party of native hunters, bound from San Antonio, and from thence to Matamoros, to behold this wonderful region."

"I was not long waiting for the coveted opportunity, for it was about the season for the settlement to come down to feed upon the mosquito grass, and so there was danger of encountering parties of Indians out upon their war-path, and no company was gladly accepted, as adding one more to their number, and so far magnify their means of defense."

"The day we passed the Nueces, as the sky was overcast with clouds, and a norther threatened to come down upon us, we made an early camp, in the last clump of timber in the valley of that large river of that portion of the river."

"While I was in the act of stripping my horse, previous to pasturing him out to grass, I happened to cast my eye over the prairie, and discovered, in the distance, a small herd of buffaloes, moving leisurely towards the narrow belt of timber which, out far off, marked the course of the river. This habitat prompted them to seek the wood for protection against the chilling breath of the approaching storm."

"I had never yet killed one of those animals, although long ambitious of doing so. Therefore, hastily re-slipping the girth of my saddle, I remounted, and giving spur to my horse, bounded swiftly over the prairie in pursuit of the herd. They were moving from the westward, while our camp was south of their line of progress. So, striking off obliquely to the eastward, I hoped to intercept them long before they could reach the timber."

"The weather, as it always the case previous to a Winter norther in this region, was excessively close and sultry; not a breath of air was stirring, and the buffaloes, therefore, were traveling but slowly, and occasionally halting to snatch a mouthful of the rich mesquite grass as they moved along."

"Keeping a slight swell of the prairie between them and myself, I had come almost upon them before they caught scent of me. Then pricking my half-tired to his utmost speed, I dashed in front of the now excited animals, and halting for an instant, leveled my rifle, and singling out the leader of the herd, fired. The huge animal shook the heavy pellet from his shaggy fore, as if it had been a fly only, (for I had foolishly aimed at his only invulnerable part), and, with a maddened roar, kept on his course."

"My horse, so much unused to the chase as myself, now became alarmed, and before I could recover the reins, dashed directly across the path of the frightened animal. Seeing the imminent danger we were in of being thrown down by the headlong crowd, and trampled beneath their feet, during trend, I hurled the rowels deep into his prairie flanks, hoping to clear the herd, and pass beyond on the northern side of it. I had almost succeeded in doing this; the leading animals had flanked past their left, and I bowed, of course, by those in the rear, brought a huge cow headlong with my horse. But fortunately for my neck, and my limbs, I fell myself dashed headlong into the midst of the herd, and, by a miraculous deliverance from a fearful death, sudden turn, taken by the leaders of the herd, follow